

GENDERING REPRESENTATION: PARTIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE  
UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN BRAZIL'S STATE LEGISLATURES

BY

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation provides insights on what influences women's descriptive representation in state legislatures in Brazil. The study of female representation in Brazil provides for a good case study as the country uses a gender quota system for legislative positions since 1995 and yet has not seen a significant improvement in the number of women elected to such institutions. In order to understand the roots of female under-representation, this dissertation combines Feminist Historical Institutionalism—a complementary approach to Historical Institutionalism that focuses on the role of gender in the development of institutions—and empirical approaches to determine why so few women are elected to Brazil's state legislatures. This dissertation relies on historical narratives, interviews and participant observation, and statistical analysis to uncover the ways in which the Brazilian political system influences the low number of female candidates elected to state legislatures.

The focus on state legislatures is warranted as most research on female representation in Brazil has focused on the federal level. I argue that in federal systems like Brazil, where politicians normally rise through local and state politics before becoming federal legislators, scholars must pay closer attention to the electoral dynamics in these lower level elections to fully capture the essence of female representation at the national level.

The historical analysis shows that the combination of an electoral system that is mostly unchanged for over 60 years, a legacy of formal and informal discrimination of women in formal politics, and the constant suppression of women's movements throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the development of a system that marginalizes women in the present political system. Even as the Brazilian government attempts to address the issue of gender inequality by establishing a gender quota in 1995, women continue to be marginalized from electoral politics. The quota law fails to increase the presence of women in legislatures because the language of the law combined with Brazil well-established electoral rules provides parties with loopholes that allow them to field female candidates but not provide them with the support needed to win the election.

The empirical analysis shows that political capital—the skills acquired or learned by candidates that make them “electable” in the eyes of political elites, campaign donors, and voters—is key in increasing female representation. The analysis shows, however, that political capital in Brazil is gendered in the sense that the professions that are more likely to raise more campaign funds and more likely to win an elected seat are dominated by male candidates, reinforcing the idea that women are marginalized from electoral politics in Brazil.

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## Abbreviations

ARENA	Aliança Renovadora Nacional (Renewing National Alliance, the party of the military regime)
CFEMEA	Centro Feminino de Estudos e Assessoria (Feminist Center of Studies and Advisory)
DEM	Democratas (Democrats—Political Party)
FHI	Feminist Historical Institutionalism
FI	Feminist Institutionalism
HI	Historical Institutionalism
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement, opposition party during military regime)
NI	New Institutionalism
PCB	Partido Comunista Brasileiro (Brazilian Communist Party)
PDT	Partido Democrático Trabalhista (Worker's Democratic Party)
PC do B	Partido Comunista do Brasil (Communist Party of Brazil)
PMDB	Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement)
PPS	Partido Popular Socialista (Popular Socialist Party)
PR	Proportional Representation
PSD	Partido Social Democrático (Social Democratic Party)
PSDB	Partido Social Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Social Democratic Party)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Worker's Party)
SPM	Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres (Secretary for Women's Policies)
TRE	Tribunal Regional Eleitoral (Regional Electoral Tribunal)
TSE	Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (Superior Electoral Tribunal)

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

The study of gender in comparative politics has changed considerably during the past four decades, moving beyond research about *women in politics* towards a more comprehensive understanding of the role of gender on political processes. What started in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the study of women's political behavior using traditional categories of analysis—the 'add women and stir' model—has evolved into a legitimate subfield of comparative politics that challenges many of the well-established assumptions in an attempt to better explain the role of gender on political behavior (Baldez, 2010; Beckwith, 2010; Lovenduski, 1992). The evolution of gender and politics research has occurred in tandem with the increased presence of women in political institutions. Throughout the last three decades of the twentieth century, feminist activists were joined by feminist scholars (many of them activists) in developing studies and policies seeking to address gender inequality. Research and activism have led to significant changes in political, theoretical, and methodological terms. Politically, women have increased their presence in electoral politics, women's movements have become more influential, and discussions about gender-related policymaking have become more visible as a result of these political advancements. Theoretically, gender has become more visible as a concept in the comparative politics literature, leading to new approaches intended to understand how gender relates to various political processes. Methodologically, scholarship on the topic has created new ways to incorporate gender more directly into studies pertinent to women's causes—such as representation and policymaking.

Today, research on gender in comparative politics has an ambiguous place in the literature. It is no longer marginalized, yet it is not always well respected or considered 'mainstream' (Baldez, 2010; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). It has evolved into the study of many



important aspects of comparative politics research—such as political attitudes and behavior, social movements, political representation—and yet it struggles to be truly comparative (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). Because of these ambiguities and conflicts within the literature, scholars actively debate the future of research on gender in comparative politics, in an effort to make the study of gender part of mainstream comparative politics as well as making it more *comparative*.

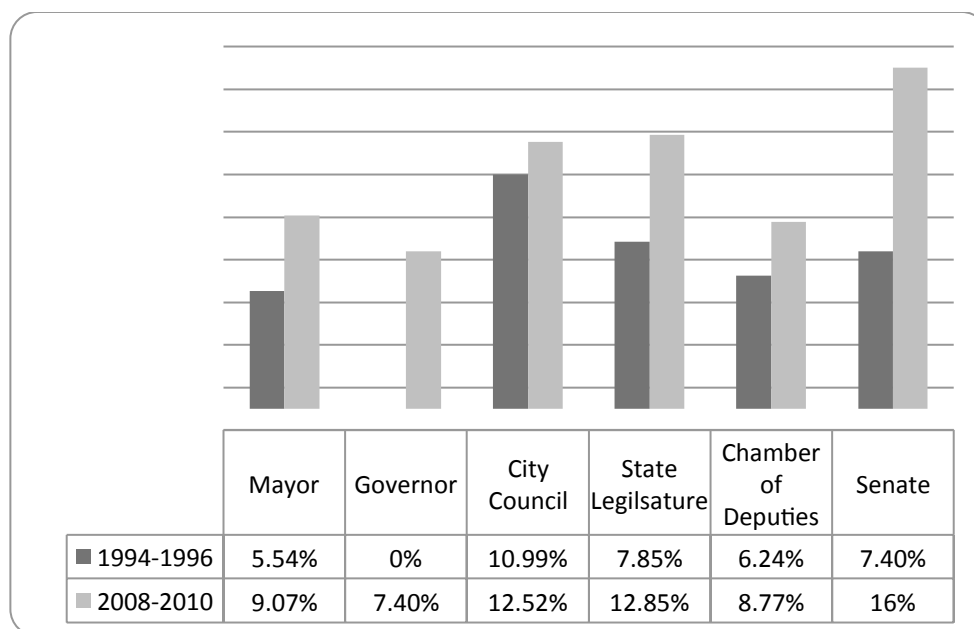
This dissertation contributes to the ongoing debate about the role of gender in the study of political institutions. Focusing on the under-representation of female politicians in legislative politics in Brazil, this work emphasizes the importance political institutions and historical legacies have on the development of a system that marginalizes women from electoral politics. Brazil is a unique case in the study of women's descriptive representation in electoral politics. Women continue to be enormously underrepresented in politics, even though public opinion hints that Brazilian voters are receptive to electing more women. According to a public opinion poll, 83 percent of the people surveyed believed that more women in politics would lead to improvements in Brazil's political system, and 75 percent believed that the political system would only be truly representative if more women were elected to public office (SPM, 2010). Brazilians have shown they are not afraid of voting for women by electing Dilma Rouseff, their first woman president, in 2010 in an election where over two thirds of the population voted for a woman presidential candidate in the first round election.<sup>1</sup> The election of a female president was a landmark for feminists and gender equality advocates. However, the election of a female president is not, by itself, an indication that the country has reached a positive level of gender

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<sup>1</sup> In the first round election, Workers Party (PT) candidate Dilma Rouseff received over 49 percent of the votes. Ms. Rouseff ended up winning the presidency with 56 percent of votes in the runoff election. A second woman candidate, Green Party's (PV) Marina Silva received over 19 percent of first round votes. Combined, both women received over 68 percent of votes in the first round of the 2010 presidential election (TSE, 2012).

equality in electoral politics. Women are severely underrepresented at all levels of government—local, state, and federal—despite the 1996 implementation of a quota law requiring parties to allocate 30 percent of their legislative candidacies for women.

Figure 1.1 Percentage of Women Elected to Brazilian Political Institutions<sup>2</sup>



The implementation of the quota law led to a modest increase in the number of female legislators elected to City Councils, State Assemblies, and the Chamber of Deputies. Brazilian politics scholars have argued that the country's electoral rules (and open-list proportional representation system) coupled with women's limited access to political power are the main culprits of the quota law's limited success (Alves, 2010; Alves & Cavenaghi, 2009; Araújo, 2009; C. Araújo & J.E.D. Alves, 2007; L. F. Miguel & de QUEIROZ, 2006; Rangel, 2009). While such assertions are correct, in order to fully understand why the quota law led to a limited increase in the number of female legislators and why women have been traditionally under-represented in Brazilian electoral politics, one must also take in consideration the ways in which

<sup>2</sup> Sources: CFEMEA (2010) and TSE (2010). Candidate gender quotas were established for the elections for City Council, State Assembly, and Chamber of Deputies.

the political system evolved in Brazil and how that relates to female political under-representation.

In this dissertation I focus on women's descriptive representation at the state level (state legislatures) in Brazil. Most research on gender representation (including research on Brazil) tends to focus on the national level, without fully understanding the dynamics at the sub-national level. A closer look at sub-national political units, such as Brazilian state legislatures, is essential to capture the fundamental political obstacles to women's political representation. This is especially true in a federal system like Brazil where politicians tend to start their careers at the local and sub-national levels. The underlying question driving this dissertation is "What drives the under-representation of women in Brazilian state legislatures?" To answer this question, this dissertation combines Feminist Historical Institutionalism (FHI) with empirical research to paint a picture of Brazil's political system and how it influences female political representation. The primary theoretical assumption driving this dissertation is that gender and gendered biases are embedded in political institutions, affecting actor behavior and institutional change in ways that can only be understood if the relationship between gender and institutions is untangled. Focusing on three aspects of Brazil's electoral politics—the evolution of the electoral system, the quota law, and individual campaigns in the 2010 election—this dissertation shows how gender plays an important role in the election of state legislators in the country.

What follows in this introductory chapter is an examination of theoretical and methodological concepts used in this dissertation. Section 1.1 provides a definition of gender and how it affects political institutions. Section 1.2 discusses the importance of the presence of women in politics, paying special attention to the concept of descriptive representation. Section 1.3 elaborates on *Comparative Politics of Gender*, focusing on the importance of gender in the

political process. Section 1.4 provides a brief discussion of the importance of studying sub-national institutions such as Brazil's State Assemblies. Finally, section 1.5 provides an outline for the dissertation.

## **1.1 Women, Men, and Gendered Institutions**

The study of women's representation goes beyond understanding women's presence in the political system. As Childs (2008, xviii) aptly puts it, "if the 'personal is political' then politics is everywhere." In order to fully understand the role of women in the political system, one must first understand what gender is and how it affects politics. *Woman*, defined as the biological opposite and definitional antonym to man, is inadequate to explain the complexities present in politics and representation. Thus, *gender*—defined as the complex process that is the social construction of men's and women's identities in relation to each other—is a concept better suited to explain how men and women navigate the political process (Mazur and Goertz 2008, Krook and Childs 2010, Beckwith 2010). In other words, gender is more than the mere biological distinctions between men and women, and its impact on politics is dynamic and dependent on the constant "negotiation" of what being a woman (or a man) means in society.

In most modern democracies women have enjoyed formal equality for decades, sharing with men the right to vote, stand in elections, and compete for public office (Phillips, 1991, p. 60). This formal equality has not, however, translated itself into equality in numbers (see Table 1.1). The indisputable male dominance in governments worldwide strongly suggests that the nature of government and politics is gendered and biased against women. Political institutions are gendered in the sense that the processes, practices, ideologies, and distributions of power are directly related to the relationship (negotiation) between men, women, and their gendered identities (Beckwith 2010, Krook and Childs 2010, Mackay et al. 2011). Political institutions are

biased against women because they were created by men, interpreted from the standpoint of men in leading positions, and consequently defined by the absence of women (Ackers 1992). This dissertation shows how Brazilian political institutions have helped to keep the number of women in legislative positions at low level, while paying close attention to the importance of gender in this process. In other words, it investigates how gender has played a role in the low levels of women's representation in electoral politics in Brazil.

## **1.2 The Importance of Women's Presence in Electoral Politics: The Concept of Representation**

The study of gender and elections is directly related to the study of representation and its impact on the political system. In this dissertation, representation is understood as the combination of factors that ultimately lead to political leaders *acting on behalf* of citizens. Pitkin (1967, 1969) conceptualizes the term as four interrelated dimensions: formal<sup>3</sup>, descriptive, symbolic<sup>4</sup>, and substantive. Descriptive representation—what a representative looks like—and substantive representation—what a representative does—are the two dimensions of representation most widely discussed in the gender and politics literature. In this section I discuss the importance of women's descriptive representation, focusing on the importance of electing more women and on the categorization of women as a cohesive representative group.

Pitkin argues that descriptive representation is not about acting with authority or being accountable for actions. In the author's words, "it depends on the representative's characteristics, on what s/he *is* or is *like*, on being rather than doing something" (Pitkin, 1967, p. 61). Here the representative does not act for others; s/he "stands for" them. Pitkin (1967) contends that even if

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<sup>3</sup> Formalistic views of representation, in Pitkin's (1967) perceptive, account for the rules that authorize representatives to act on behalf of and be held accountable to citizens.

<sup>4</sup> Symbolic representation is concerned with how representatives are perceived and evaluated by citizens (see Pitkin 1967 and Schwindt-Bayer 2005).

a politician stands for a specific group it does not mean that policy-making will benefit that group (substantive representation). Therefore, electing women may not necessarily mean creating an environment favorable for gender related policies. Scholars argue that we must look beyond purely descriptive representation to fully capture what representation means to minorities (Celis & Childs, 2008; Gerber, Morton, & Rietz, 1998; Haider-Markel, 2007). However, Lovenduski (2005) contends that descriptive representation (electing and appointing women to political positions) is important to furthering women-specific policies. Including women in the policymaking process is important to bringing attention to gender related issues such as domestic violence, divorce, and abortion. Working under the assumption that institutions are *gendered* and biased, this research argues that the direct presence of women in the political process is essential to influence institutional change and actor behavior in a way that redresses gender inequalities present in the political system.

The characterization of women as a cohesive group is at the center of the argument for increased women's descriptive representation. Some scholars argue that women have multiple identities and see the world in different ways, and assuming that women will better represent women is to ignore these differences (Celis, 2009; Childs, 2006). This research posits that while women's interests vary greatly, their shared experiences and their unprivileged position in the political system warrant a conceptualization of women as a cohesive group. Mansbridge (1999, p. 648) posits that "in certain historical conditions, what it means to be a member of a particular group includes some form of second-class citizenship." Women as a group surely fit this category. The historical exclusion of women from positions of political leadership suggests the second-class status of women. Women won the right to vote in most modern democracies sometime in the early twentieth century, after years of protest and pressure from civil society.

The ability to vote, however, did not automatically translate into significant changes in perceptions of their political capability and women were barred, directly or indirectly, from entering politics in most countries. It wasn't until after World War II that women started to actively pursue and win elected seats. Table 1.1 shows the trend of increased representation of women in world politics, from nearly non-existent in the mid-twentieth century to almost 20 percent today. That is a considerable increase, but these numbers are still low given that women are roughly half of the world's population.

Table 1.1  
Percentage of Women in Parliaments in the World<sup>5</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>1955</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Women in Lower House</b>	3.0%	7.5%	8.1%	10.9%	12.0%	11.6%	16.0%	19.5%
<b>Women in Senate</b>	2.2%	7.7%	9.3%	10.5%	12.7%	9.4%	15.0%	18.3%

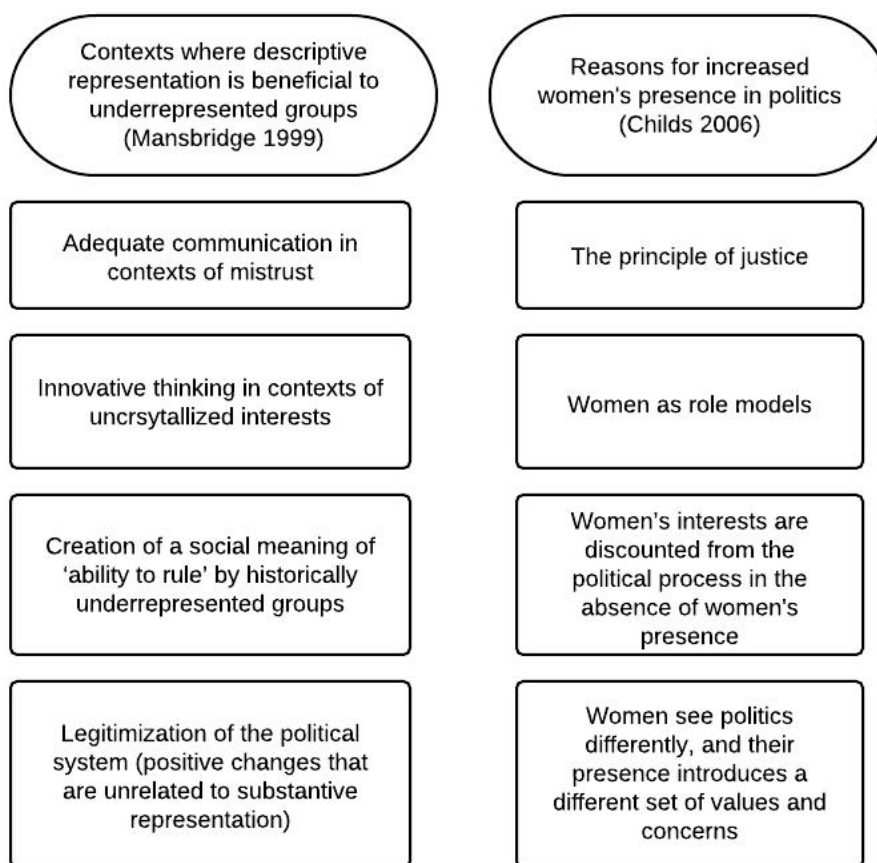
If gender is a social construction, and the experiences of women differ from that of men, then the low number of women involved in politics influences the nature of the political system and the priorities set in policy discussions. Women share common life experiences based on gender inequality and discrimination. Therefore, the presence of women in politics (descriptive representation) is essential for the development of a political system that is more representative to both men and women (substantive representation). Mansbridge (1999, p. 654) states that “descriptive representation is not always necessary, but [...] the benefits of such representation is contextual, asking when the benefits of such representation might be most likely to exceed the costs.” The author then indicates four contexts in which descriptive representation is beneficial to disadvantaged groups and to the polity as a whole: adequate communication in contexts of mistrust, innovative thinking in contexts of uncrytallized interests, the creation of a social meaning of ‘ability to rule’ by historically disadvantaged groups (symbolic meaning of

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2011).

increasing the presence of minorities in the political system), and the legitimization of the political system in the context of past discriminations as positive changes to the political system that are unrelated to substantive representation (Mansbridge, 1999, p. 628).

Figure 1.2 Benefits of Descriptive Representation and the Case for Women's Presence



The four contexts elaborated by Mansbridge are used by feminist scholars to promote women's descriptive representation. For example, Childs (2006) identifies four reasons for women's political presence: the principle of justice, where not having women involved in the political system is an injustice (see also Phillips, 1995); women as role models, where the presence of women in politics will lead to an increase in the number of women interested in politics; the idea that women's interests—broadly defined—are discounted from the political process in the absence of women's presence (see also Clark, 1994); and the argument that women see politics differently, and their presence introduces a different set of values and



concerns. The arguments proposed above relate directly to this dissertation's main argument—that institutions are gendered and biased against women—and establish descriptive representation as a key component of feminist studies.

### **1.3 Comparative Politics of Gender and Political Representation**

The growth of research on women, gender, and politics in the past decades has led to the development of a vast and varied body of scholarship. As Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll (2006, p. 512) posit, “Whereas in the mid-1970s a scholar could conceivably read everything that had ever been written or published on women and politics in the discipline, in 2006 the same scholar would have difficulty merely keeping abreast of gender-related research and writing in her or his own subfield.” However, the study of gender in politics remains, in many ways, separated from the mainstream political science (Baldez 2010). While such studies have become common in all political science subfields, discussions about the role of gender in the political process are still seen as a completely separate body of literature. This is especially true in comparative politics, where gender and politics research has progressed to become a methodologically and substantively diverse scholarship that many times is seen as an isolated area of the sub-field (Schwindt-Bayer 2010). This separation between gender related research and “mainstream” comparative politics scholarship has led gender politics scholars to propose the development of a Comparative Politics of Gender (CPG).

The main goal of CPG is to make gender central to comparative political studies.<sup>6</sup> Beckwith (2010, p. 160) states that “a comparative politics of gender approach would take seriously the extent to which gender is a major and primary constitutive element of political

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<sup>6</sup> Feminist political science scholars see the addition to gender as a central aspect to scholarship as one of three key aspects of their research agenda (see Driscoll & Krook, 2009; Mackay & Krook, 2011), the other two being expand the definition of politics to include informal processes and generate insights that can be used to pursue political change (Beckwith, 2005; Kulawik, 2009; Lovenduski, 1998; Waylen, 2009).

power.” In doing so, CPG proponents are acknowledging that gender, defined as the complex social construction of men’s and women’s identities in relation to each other, must be seen as a central aspect of our understanding of how the political system works (Beckwith, 2010; Goertz & Mazur, 2008; Krook & Childs, 2010). In other words, gender as a concept must be used and acknowledged as a key aspect of comparative politics research, just as race, class, and other meta-concepts are constantly used in the literature. Therefore, the goal of CPG as a theoretical approach is to develop a deeper understanding of specific policy areas that shape the lives of men and women, paying attention to the relationship between gender and other widely studied concepts, consequently bridging the gap between gender related studies and comparative politics scholarship as a whole.

However, adding gender to comparative politics is easier said than done. A number of feminist/gender scholars and “gender skeptics” have reservations about the utility of adding gender as a key concept when studying comparative politics. Moreover, scholars are also concerned about the methodological integrity of research centering on gender. To some, gender related research is not truly comparative since it tends to use gender-specific theories that were developed outside the main paradigms in comparative politics. To others, gender as a concept is too complex to be generalizable, making it difficult to empirically test its relationship to political phenomena (Baldez, 2010; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010; Waylen, 2010). CPG proponents, including this author, acknowledges these problems while contending that adding gender to mainstream comparative research is beneficial to both gender scholars and non-gender scholars. The development of a theoretical paradigm like CPG can help gender-related scholarship to be more comparative and compatible with mainstream scholarship, while also allowing for a deeper understanding of the role of gender on non-gender specific political phenomena (Schwindt-Bayer

2010). In order to do so, proponents of CPG need to clearly establish its role, carefully delineating the direction of gender-related research, the ways such research can be more “comparative,” and establishing the connection between gender-related research and mainstream comparative politics.

CPG proponents see bridging the gap between gender research and comparative politics literature in distinct, yet similar ways. In the March 2010 issue of Perspectives on Politics, influential scholars on feminist and gender related research debated the future of gender in politics and the establishment of a clear CPG paradigm. For Beckwith (2010, p. 165), a comparative politics of gender can lead to clearer questions about politics and power and more complete answers to these questions. Caraway (2010, p. 174) warns that CPG scholars must be careful to not just “add women and stir” as this approach has proven to be disruptive for gendered analyses. Chappell (2010, p. 183) sees CPG as a way to improve our explanations of the nature of the political environment in which institutional actors (men and women) operate, better understanding their choices, opportunities, and constraints. Schwindt-Bayer (2010, p. 177) explains that CPG proponents must improve efforts at comparison, making explicit how region and country specific research can contribute to a comparative picture.

Schwindt-Bayer (2010) also contends that CPG scholars must work toward integrating gender research into broader comparative politics research by creating an open dialogue with “non-gender” scholars, clearly delineating how each area of research benefits from each other. Similarly, Baldez (2010) sees that two things are required to integrate CPG to mainstream political science. First, scholars must pay attention to how key terms, concepts, and variables are used in gender and non-gender related research. By understanding how these two research areas define key aspects of scholarship differently, CPG scholars and comparative politics scholars can

work more closely in bridging the gap between the two literatures. Second, scholars on both sides must be more open-minded. Specifically, mainstream scholars must take seriously the exclusion of women from comparative politics research, while gender scholars must be aware that gender and gendered relations must survive empirical scrutiny.

Conceptualizing gender is, arguably, one of the most contentious issues when trying to integrate gender-related research to mainstream political science. Gendering research, or including gender into political analysis, is problematic because it entails the inclusion of subjective understanding of key concepts that many researchers are not comfortable with. The conceptualization of gender and the impact such conceptualization has on the direction of research is an issue that should not be taken lightly. Sometimes, just adding gender as a category in an analysis can lead to new results with direct implications on the literature (Paxton, 2008). But to say that adding a dichotomous variable named gender is enough to account for the differences between male and female political actors is to ignore that the subtle nuances in the dynamic between male and female actors. As Goertz and Mazur (2008, p. 7) explain, “gendering means bringing out and making explicit hidden biases and assumptions in standard conceptualization.” In other words, to add gender into comparative politics research means to include gender as a category when necessary, but most importantly, to account for the nuances that gendered relationships can create in a political system.

The goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the CPG debate (and the proposed integration of gender-related research) by investigating the ways in which gender has influenced the election of female state legislators in Brazil. This is done not only by analyzing data containing gender as a category (Chapter 5), but also by tracing the ways in which the Brazilian political system allowed for women to become an under-represented sector of society in electoral

politics. Using Feminist Historical Institutionalism to contextualize the current situation of female politicians in Brazil, this dissertation shows how female politicians have been historically marginalized from electoral politics in Brazil. By analyzing the country's political history, the implementation of the quota law, and the election of female candidates to state legislatures in Brazil, this dissertation elucidates the overt and subtle ways in which Brazilian political institutions undermine the presence of women in legislative politics. Therefore, this dissertation uses a gendered analysis in the sense that the relationships between male and female political actors are taken in consideration when creating a picture of what the Brazilian political system looks like and how that impacts the representation of female politicians.

Studies on women's descriptive representation have been lauded as an area where CPG goals are more clearly achieved. Schiwnadt-Bayer (2010, p. 179) sees studies on the election of women as the creators of "generalizable theories of women's descriptive representation based on empirical evidence from a diverse set of cases." The rise in availability of data on women's descriptive representation in the last two decades is the main reason why this area of research has experienced success in the development of empirically based hypothesis testing. This body of literature, which includes studies on gender quotas, has been dominated by country or region specific research. It has been successful in the creation of generalizable hypotheses on the factors influencing the success of gender quotas and women candidates in elections across the world. Consequently, empirically strong research has helped legitimize such studies beyond the gender related literature, attracting both feminist and non-feminist scholars and helping create an area of study where gender is also acknowledged by "mainstream" scholarship.

Such studies have been instrumental in the development of gender related scholarship that transcends the invisible barrier between feminist/gender-based research and other (non-

gendered) studies of political representation. There is, however, still room for improvement in the scope of research and the role of gender in such studies. Krook (2010) argues that the literature on women's descriptive representation would benefit greatly if scholars seek to integrate additional strategies for comparison and a broader notion of gender into their studies. Krook (2010, p. 230) believes the scope of studies should be broadening, mainly by "opening the definition of a 'case' to include sub-country units and events, and connecting intensive study of a single unit to patterns generated from the investigation of other similar units." Krook (2010) also suggests that studies on women's representation must take a closer look at the relationship between men and women and between masculinity and femininity. When describing women's representation, most studies focus exclusively on the election of women to public office, not paying close attention to how elected women's characteristics differ from, or are similar to, those of elected men. As Krook (2010, p. 235) posits, previous research suggests that "men and women who win elections may resemble one another more than do the electorate." In other words, such research has not been successful in showing the differences between male and female candidates, between losing and winning men and women. Therefore, a study of women's representation is not complete unless it includes a clear understanding of how gender affects the election process as a whole, how men differ from women in this process, and how institutions shape the behavior of all actors, male or female.

Broadening the scope of comparative studies and including men in the analysis of women's representation are two strategies directly related to the development of CPG and the progression of the study of women's representation in comparative politics. Krook's propositions are especially pertinent to this dissertation. This is an intensive study of the Brazilian electoral process and its influence on the election of women to state institutions. By focusing on Brazilian

state legislatures, this study will provide an analysis on the factors influencing the election of women to the country's sub-national elected institutions and how these factors may influence men and women differently. Another objective of this study is to establish parameters that can be used as a comparison between Brazilian sub-national institutions and similar institutions in different countries, especially in Latin American states and countries that share similar electoral institutions. This study is also influenced by Krook's proposition for a broader understanding of gender in CPG and women's descriptive representation research. The focus of this dissertation is the election of women, but it acknowledges the role of men and women in the creation, implementation, and reform of the quota law. This research also seeks to understand how male and female candidates influence party strategy during elections and the similarities and differences between winning and losing male and female candidates in the 2010 state legislative elections.

By using Feminist Historical Institutionalism as the driving methodological anchor (see Chapter 2), this dissertation provides a comprehensive view of Brazilian state legislative elections, showing how gendered institutions have led to the development of a system that is implicitly and explicitly biased against women. By focusing on three specific aspects of the Brazilian political system—the evolution of the country's electoral system, the establishment and change of the quota law, and individual characteristics and strategies needed to win an election—this dissertation seeks to not only provide a more accurate picture of how institutions are gendered (biased against female politicians) in that country, but also to establish a framework for comparison of the presence of women in electoral politics between Brazil and other countries.

#### **1.4 Women's Descriptive Representation: Why Study State Level Elections?**

This is one of the first comprehensive studies of women's descriptive representation at the state level in Brazil. The majority of research regarding women's representation has focused on the national level, embedding local and state/province level variations within the national landscape (see Vengroff, Nyiri, & Fugiero, 2003). The focus on representation at the national level overlooks the role that state and local elections play in the socialization and training of candidates. The literature on women's representation in state legislatures is more diverse in American Politics (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Hogan, 2001; Nechemias, 1987; Rule, 1987, 1990; Sanbonmatsu, 2002, 2010; Thomas & Wilcox, 2005; Welch, Ambrosius, Clark, & Darcy, 1985) 1985) than in other countries (Jones, 2004; Jones & Navia, 1999; Studlar & Welch, 1991; Welch & Studlar, 1996). This dissertation acknowledges contributions of both literatures in the development of its theoretical and methodological foundations.

Why study sub-national elections? I argue that a closer look at legislative positions below the national level is important, especially in federal political systems. The connection between state and national legislative positions is clear. Norris (1997) argues that federal systems tend to create complex routes into legislative office with horizontal and lateral career movers. In Brazil, Samuels (2003, p. 34) suggests that "most [federal] deputies arrive in the Chamber of Deputies after serving some years in state legislatures, on municipal councils, and as mayors." Therefore, in order to fully comprehend what influences women's representation at the national level, it is crucial to develop a better understanding of what influences electoral success at the local and state levels. Samuels' (2003) assertion is supported by the biographical information of Federal Deputies. When looking at the Brazilian Congress, 33 percent of all Federal Deputies elected for the 2007-2011 Congress were state legislators before becoming federal legislators, and 63



percent of all female Deputies were elected to state or local level positions either at the legislative or executive branches before moving to the national level (TSE, 2012).

In federal systems like Brazil the study of the national legislature does not tell us the whole story about political representation. Because women are newcomers to the Brazilian system and most national legislators start their political career at the local or state level, it is imperative that scholars understand the role of political experience on the electability of women to legislative positions in Brazil and the importance of gender dynamics in the campaign process. A comparative study of Brazilian state level elections can help us better understand the hurdles encountered by women competing for other positions of legislative power, including the Chamber of Deputies in the National Congress.

While this is a country case study, the theoretical and empirical discussions brought up by this and the following chapters contribute to the literature on women's descriptive representation as a whole. Theoretically, Brazil's distinct electoral system makes its case unique, but understanding the ways gendered institutions influence the election of women will help the overall discussion of descriptive representation of women across the world by clearly defining gendered institutions. Empirically, the variables used in the original datasets developed in this research can serve as a starting point to create a method of analysis that compares local and state level elections across countries, especially those that have similar electoral systems. Moreover, gender and politics scholars have recently called for an expansion of studies on sub-national legislatures. Scholars argue that systematic single-case studies and the study of sub-national units and events can help our overall understandings of women's access to public office (Krook, 2010).

This dissertation also adds to the Brazilian politics literature. By re-examining key contributions in the Brazilian politics literature (Ames, 1995; Mainwaring, 1991; Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009; Samuels, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d, 2003) through the FHI approach and connecting the current literature on women's representation in Brazil (Alves, 2010; Alves & Cavenaghi, 2009; Araújo, 2001, 2003, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; C. Araújo & J.E.D. Alves, 2007; Matos, 2011; Pinheiro, 2007), this dissertation aims to assist in understanding the factors influencing women's descriptive representation across Brazilian states. Keeping these theoretical and methodological contributions in mind, the following chapters seek to directly contribute to the gender and politics literature, the Comparative Politics of Gender approach, and the Brazilian politics literature.

### **1.5 Electing Women to Brazil's State Assemblies: Dissertation Outline**

Working with the underlying assumption that gender matters in comparative politics, this dissertation shows how political institutions have evolved under a system that marginalized women for decades, affecting men and women differently in their attempt to secure a seat in Brazilian state legislatures. Using Feminist Historical Institutionalism (FHI) as the driving approach and contextualizing empirical analyses based on gendered legacies of the Brazilian system, this dissertation shows the importance of formal and informal political institutions in the continuing under-representation of women in state legislatures. Chapter 2 establishes FHI as a theoretical and methodological approach that explains women's representation, highlighting the scholarly developments of the past three decades and outlining how a combination of FHI and empirical analysis can help better explain the gendered nature of Brazilian political institutions. Tracing the evolution of women's descriptive representation in contemporary Brazil, Chapter 3 shows that the country's electoral institutions, including political parties, are gendered and biased

against women. Looking at the dawn of Brazil's modern political system (the Vargas era) then focusing on regime change and its relation to the evolution of electoral institutions in the country, Chapter 3 illustrates how male dominated political institutions—especially during the authoritarian periods—undermined women's movements and led to the development of a political system where women were practically not allowed (or not expected) to participate in formal politics. The combination of a long-lasting electoral system that changed little in the last 70 years and male-dominated political institutions helped establish a political system characterized by the lack of female politicians. The result was a generation characterized by a gendered political environment in the 1980s that discouraged the emerging parties from actively introducing women to formal politics.

Chapter 4 exposes the limits of the quota law under Brazil's current electoral rules, focusing on how the gendered nature of Brazilian electoral institutions produces a system from which women are implicitly and explicitly excluded. This chapter spotlights the 1996 signing of the quota law and the 2009 law reform that attempted to make the law more enforceable in the context of the historical development of the country's open-list proportional representation system and its influence on party development. Comparing these two time periods—1996 and 2009—Chapter 4 concludes that a combination of factors has led to the limited success of the quota law. First, because the quota law was somewhat “forced” onto political parties, the political culture inside these parties did not change significantly in 1996, consequently not opening space for women as was expected. Second, the institutional uncertainty brought by the enactment of the law in 1996 and the signing of the mini-political reform of 2009 were not sufficient to entice parties to increase the number of viable women candidates. In an attempt to abide by the law, or at least show some effort in increasing the number of women candidates,

parties started to field women candidates who had no experience in running a political campaign, leading to the increase in unprepared candidates but not in the number of women contenders. Finally, the lack of enforcement mechanisms allowed parties to break the law without fear of being punished, and even an attempt to make the law more enforceable in 2009 did not force parties to change their approach on how to select and support candidates. This chapter shows that enacting a law to redress gender inequality is not enough to considerably increase the presence of women in electoral institutions. Moreover, when the electoral system is historically gendered, it provides for an environment where enforcement of the law is questionable and parties have little incentive to change their election strategies, maintaining the number of elected women considerably low.

Even though parties provide little support to women as a group, some women still find a way to win elections. Chapter 5 focuses on the ways women have been able to overcome barriers and successfully win a seat in a state legislature. This chapter uses the concept of political capital as essential to winning a legislative seat. Political capital is defined as skills acquired or learned by candidates that make them “electable” in the eyes of political elites, campaign donors, and voters. Political capital can be earned in different ways in Brazilian politics. Using data from the 2010 elections and relying on candidate interviews conducted during that same election, Chapter 5 makes the argument that the characteristics that can be translated into political capital are part of a gendered political and social structure. The professions that are more likely to produce successful candidates are dominated by men, and even when involved in such professions, women still struggle to acquire campaign funds, the most important aspect of a successful campaign. Navigating through the 2010 electoral process, I show how some women are able to

overcome their diminished political capital, and how women that are already part of the political “game” tend to be more successful in their election campaigns.

This dissertation concludes with a brief overview of the Feminist Historical Institutionalism approach, showing how it can benefit the study of gender and elections. Then it discusses the future of women’s descriptive representation in Brazil, first by pondering on the potential the 2009 political reform has for increasing the number of competitive women candidates, and then introducing some of the proposed changes currently being debated in the National Congress regarding Brazil’s electoral institutions that could have a direct impact on the election of women. Finally, this dissertation outlines prospects for future research based on the approaches used in chapter 3 through 5, describing the epistemological and methodological developments that can improve research on women’s representation in Brazil, gender representation in a comparative perspective, and feminist institutionalism as a whole.

## **Chapter 2. Feminist Historical Institutionalism and Women's Descriptive Representation: Engendering the Study of Representation**

Electoral politics is still a man's world. While women have achieved significant electoral victories in the past decades, the visible and invisible barriers they face when entering politics are still present. When, in 2008, Hillary Clinton became a contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in the United States, the question "Are Americans ready for a woman president?" was a common talking point in the media. The same question was asked in Brazil in 2010, when Dilma Rouseff and Marina Silva became clear contenders in the presidential elections. In both countries political parties had to, directly or indirectly, justify why the country was "ready" for a woman president, emphasizing that these were all extremely competent women with proven track records. If the political system is a place where both men and women have equal power and credibility, questions such as the one above should not be part of the political discourse. After almost one century of universal suffrage in most countries, women are still underrepresented in electoral politics and face unique barriers, some very visible, some very subtle, in their struggle for political presence.

Understanding these unique barriers and how they influence the election of women is one objective of gender and politics scholars. To identify which factors influence the election of women, scholars have, throughout the past four decades, developed a number of theories and typologies. As gender and politics research continues to improve theoretically and methodologically, researchers must acknowledge the advancements of these past decades while clearly identifying ways to improve gender related research. The Comparative Politics of Gender (CPG) approach seeks to bring gender to the mainstream of comparative politics and to make gender-related research more comparative. Keeping CPG and its objectives in mind, this

dissertation uses Feminist Historical Institutionalism (FHI) as the driving methodological approach, focusing on the historical analysis of Brazil's political institutions to contextualize empirical analyses and explain why women struggle to win legislative elections in the country. FHI is one of the approaches associated with Feminist Institutionalism, a systematic and comprehensive study of gender based on the tenets of New Institutionalism (Kenny & Mackay, 2009; F. Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell, 2010; Fiona Mackay & Krook, 2011; F. Mackay & Meier, 2003; F. Mackay & Waylen, 2009).

This chapter first provides a brief survey of the literature on women's representation, focusing on the typologies and factors used by scholars to explain women's representation in comparative politics. Section 2.2 discusses Feminist Institutionalism (FI) as an overarching research agenda and Feminist Historical Institutionalism as the driving theoretical and methodological approach used in this dissertation. There I explain the benefits of FI on the study of gender and representation and on comparative politics research as a whole. I also elaborate on the methodological underpinnings of Feminist Historical Institutionalism, focusing on how it is used to explain female under-representation in Brazil. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion about the methodology and analysis of the following chapters in this dissertation, focusing on how FHI is used in this research and how it helps contextualize the empirical analyses of the later chapters.

## **2.1 Explaining Women's Representation: Candidacies and Elections**

Empirically-oriented research on women's representation yielded a number of influential works explaining the barriers female politicians encounter when running for political office. Scholars have developed a number of typologies to explain women's (under) representation. The bulk of the scholarship on the issue focuses on two specific aspects of the phenomenon: the

recruitment of women as candidates and the election of women candidates. When looking at the recruitment process, scholars have centered on what has been defined as the supply and demand model. This model explains what drives parties to select women as candidates. Scholars have argued that the supply of candidates is directly related to the combination of an aspirant's resources—time, money, support networks, political experience, and relevant skills—and motivation—the drive, ambition, and interest in politics (R. L. Fox & Lawless, 2005; R.L. Fox & Lawless, 2011; Galligan, 2007; Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2008; P. Norris & Inglehart, 2001; P. Norris & Inglehart, 2005; Paxton, 1997). Demand side variables, or the factors influencing the need for women candidates, are often associated with party behavior toward female candidates as well as any other political institution that has a direct effect on the presence of women candidates, such as quota laws (M. Krook, 2010a; J Lovenduski & Norris, 1993; Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007).

The supply and demand model has provided the prevailing framework for the analysis of women's access to political office. On the supply side, scholars have found that ambition plays an important role in the under-representation of women candidates, consequently affecting the number of women elected. In most countries, men are consistently found to be more interested in politics than women (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001; Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006; Paxton, 1997; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007). Moreover, women tend to have considerably lower access to resources needed to run a successful political campaign, since these are normally acquired through education and employment (Paxton, 1997). Therefore, women's access to education and their presence in the workforce can have a positive effect on the number of women candidates (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2008). On the demand side, party elites play a central role in bringing in aspiring women candidates. If parties see women as viable (winning) candidates then the number



of women candidates must rise. However, party dynamics tend to create a system where women are discouraged from entering politics (supply side), keeping their numbers low, and consequently leading parties to favor male candidates that are seen as more likely to win an election.

The differences in electoral systems, party structures, socioeconomic development levels, and cultural factors call for the development of clear typologies for the study of gender and elections that can be tested across countries and time (P. Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009; Tripp & Kang, 2008). While their nomenclature may differ slightly, authors have consistently investigated specific factors influencing women's descriptive representation. For the purposes of this discussion I divide these factors into three categories: institutional, structural, and cultural factors.

Institutional factors are the formal barriers or incentives present in the political system—through lawmaking, administrative decisions, or rule-based procedures—that can help or hinder the election of women. Works using institutional factors to explain women's representation have focused on the nature of the political system (Jones, 1998; Jones & Navia, 1999; Tremblay, 2008), district magnitude (Araujo & Alves, 2007; Engstrom, 1987; Matland, 1993; Pippa Norris, 2004; Rule, 1987; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009; Studlar & Welch, 1991), party structures and ideologies (Bruhn, 2003; Caul, 1999; Golosov, 2001; Hickman, 1997), and gender quotas and other affirmative action policies targeting women as a group (D Dahlerup, 2006; D. Dahlerup, 2008; M. Krook, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009).

Structural factors are the combination of socioeconomic factors and demographic characteristics that are influential in determining a woman's possibility to reach elected office in a country or region. For example, scholars state that high numbers of women in the labor force

may open the system to women because voters would be more accustomed to seeing women in positions of power, and more women with high levels of education and managerial experience increase the pool of possible women candidates (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2008). Another key factor discussed in the literature is the level of economic development of a country or region. Scholars disagree on its role in the election of women, making this a contentious factor (Araujo & Alves, 2007; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Moore & Shackman, 1996; Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Paxton, 1997; Yoon, 2004).

Studies focusing on cultural aspects emphasize the influence of attitudes toward women on female representation. Negative attitudes toward women are a consequence of historical legacies in political systems and institutional constraints that were present in the system in the past and may still be in place, sometimes making it hard for women to be successful politicians. However, as attitudes towards women in society change, the possibility of women successfully increasing their numbers in the political arena increases (Hill, 1981; P. Norris & Inglehart, 2001; P Norris & Inglehart, 2005; Thomas & Wilcox, 2005; Tripp & Kang, 2008).

These two models/typologies provide a basis for the majority of empirically-based research developed in the past three decades. They provide gender scholars with elegant ways to explain women's political recruitment and access to political office, allowing scholars to compare specific aspects across countries and across time, providing much needed insight into the evolution of women's representation in the past four decades. However, recent criticism has focused on the limitations of empirically based approaches such as the supply and demand model and typologies explaining the election of women.

Neo-institutional and feminist scholars alike have provided important critiques of the supply and demand model. On the institutionalist side, scholars have argued that the supply and

demand model fails to acknowledge the importance of embedded institutions in this process (M. Krook, 2010a). Embedded institutions, or the “subjective mental constructs that individuals use to interpret the world around them and make choices” (North 1990 111), become central to the understanding of a dynamic issue such as candidate selection. Based on the assumption that embedded institutions shape individual behavior, then perceptions of how the world works influences individual candidates and party leaders in ways that make it hard to accurately separate candidate selection into two distinct parts. Therefore, the supply and demand model does not fully explain the behavior of key political actors, such as aspirant politicians and party leaders, leaving important aspects of the candidate selection process unexplained.

Skeptical of economic models that generally assume the interchangeability of actors and consequent lack of context, feminist scholars argue that the gendered nature of the political system must be more explicitly acknowledged in models seeking to explain women’s presence in politics. Therefore, the supply and demand model must be more attentive to the role gender plays both on the supply side (ambition, access to resources, education and place in the workforce) and the demand side (institutions, gender makeup of party elites, and perceptions of what makes an viable candidate).

Works focusing on institutional, structural, and cultural factors also have limitations. For example, it is still not clear how these factors interact with each other. Tremblay (2008, p. 9), argues that while this may create a problem in terms of causality, “it is probably more instructive to assume that cultural, socioeconomic, and political factors interact to create a dynamic that acts as a global incubator for the election of women.” Moreover, while the categorization of variables helps to create generalizable and comparative theories and hypotheses, works focusing on these factors have been limited to somewhat superficial comparisons between cross-national

variables, and have overwhelmingly centered on Western democracies (Araujo & Alves, 2007; Yoon, 2004). More importantly, works using both the supply and demand model and institutional/structural/cultural factors tend to focus solely on women. While these works acknowledge the gendered nature of political institutions, they have failed to account for it in explicit ways. By looking only at women, most times using women's descriptive representation as the dependent variable, these studies fail to recognize the importance of the interaction between men and women in the political system.

Nevertheless, the typologies developed in the past decades to explain women's representation must be taken into account as scholars seek to improve and progress gender-related research. Rather than dismissing the contributions of empirically based analyses this dissertation connects such approaches to create a more nuanced understanding of gender and its role in the electoral system. To accomplish this goal I use Feminist Historical Institutionalism to explain how historical legacies and institutional forces have led to the development of a political system in which women are marginalized. I focus first on the evolution of Brazil's electoral and party system and its connection to female underrepresentation in politics. Then I investigate the consequences of the implementation of the quota law in 1996 and the law change of 2009 to show how institutional change helped transform the electoral landscape, adding more female candidates while increasing only marginally the number of elected female legislators. Finally, I use the 2010 state legislative elections to show how Brazilian electoral institutions, including the quota law, influence the election of female legislators. By combining empirically-based and analytically-driven approaches this work provides an overview of Brazil's political system that captures in more detail the complexity of gendered relations while providing a measureable account of how specific factors influence female representation. In other words, this dissertation

uses FHI to establish why women are marginalized in Brazil's political system and empirically based analyses to define how this marginalization affects contemporary politics in the country.

Studies combining traditional empirical analyses with a more nuanced contextualization of concepts of gender are now commonplace within the gender and politics literature (see, for example M. Htun & Jones, 2002; M. Krook, 2010a; M. Krook & O'Brien, 2010; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Schwindt-Bayer, 2011). This combination of "variable-based" analyses and gendered/feminist approaches is at the heart of CPG's propositions to further the study of women's representation (M. Krook, 2010b). By actively recognizing gender as a key factor and acknowledging that gender norms, roles, and identities change across place and time, this dissertation seeks to further the current debate on gender and representation, using women's representation in Brazil as the focus of research.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of combining historical and empirical analyses is to create a more complete picture of Brazil's political system and its impact on women's representation while establishing parameters that can be used to conduct comparative analyses that go beyond Brazil's state legislative elections.

## **2.2 Feminist Institutionalism, Brazilian Politics, and Women's Descriptive Representation**

The study of institutions and political change was revolutionized by the emergence of the New Institutionalism (NI) approach over two decades ago (J.G. March & Olsen, 1984, 1989, 1995; North, 1990; Peters, 1999; Steinmo, Thelen, & Longstreth, 1992; K. Thelen, 1999). NI

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<sup>7</sup> In this dissertation I focus on how electoral institutions in Brazil are biased against female candidates, emphasizing the role of historical legacies on the marginalization of female politicians. Therefore, while I discuss gendered norms and identities, the main focus is determining the ways in which electoral institutions have influenced the under-representation of female candidates and how these institutions (formal and informal) help perpetuate the marginalization of women from politics in Brazil. By focusing on the role of electoral rules and political institutions on the marginalization of female politicians, this dissertation provides a gendered approach in the sense that the relationship between male and female political actors (politicians, civil society, voters) is explored in a way that determines how specific institutional biases are a consequence of the relationship between these actors and the nuances of such relationships across time.

scholars brought the focus of political science research back to institutions, while still acknowledging the importance of other actors in the political process. NI, however, is not a monolithic approach. Scholars tend to converge around four main NI approaches: rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, and more recently discursive institutionalism (Fiona Mackay & Krook, 2011; James G. March & Olsen, 2006; Rhodes, Binder, & Rockman, 2006). While these approaches fall within the neo-institutionalist framework, they do not always ‘agree’ on assumptions and methods.

As a consequence of this theoretical pluralism, NI has evolved into an approach that is capable of explaining a wide range of political phenomena but is also very compartmentalized and fragmented. However, there are some key assumptions that all four approaches share that are important to the progress of NI. Behind these key assumptions, NI scholars have been able to shed light on contentious and complex political issues. As Mackay et al. (2010, p. 573) argue, “NI has allowed for greater understanding about the co-constitutive nature of politics: the various ways in which actors bring about or resist change in institutions, and the way institutions shape the nature of actors’ behaviors through the construction of rules, norms, and policies.” In other words, institutions are central to understanding political behavior.

Institutions are the rules of the game in a society or the formal constraints and informal norms devised to control human interaction (North, 1990). Institutions empower and constrain actors in different ways and reduce uncertainty by creating stable, albeit not always efficient, structures for human interaction (James G. March & Olsen, 2006; North, 1990). Feminist Institutionalism (FI) is an approach that centers on the role of gender in institutional development and how this relationship empowers and constrains political actors. FI proponents argue that institutions are gendered in the sense that constructions of masculinity and femininity are

intertwined in everyday life and influence the way actors interact in society (Kenney, 1996; F. Mackay et al., 2010; Waylen, 2009). In other words, gender roles are inextricably part of institutional rules and norms.

Based on this logic, a study of women's descriptive representation is more than the mere study of male and female candidates. Such research must provide an understanding of how institutions empower and constrain male and female candidates in different ways (Lovenduski, 1998). This is especially important today as the last three decades were characterized by a number of institutional changes that directly influence women, gender relations, and gender equality (Mackay & Krook, 2011).

Understanding how gender empowers and constrains different actors (parties, political elites, and voters) is at the center of the FI framework, CPG as a paradigmatic approach, as well as this dissertation. Scholars supporting FI argue that this approach should be seen not as a new paradigmatic movement but as an attempt to make gender more central to the study of political institutions. In other words, FI must be characterized as a complement to Neo-Institutionalist approaches where gender plays a more central role in the study of institutions. Krook and Mackay (2011, p. 13) posit that NI and FI “employ broad conceptions of the political and its interconnection with the social.” Moreover, both are interested in the interaction between actors and institutions and are centrally concerned with explaining patterns of institutional creation, continuity, and change. The key contribution FI makes to NI is the conscious and systematic incorporation of gender into the study of institutions (F. Mackay et al., 2010; Fiona Mackay & Krook, 2011; F. Mackay & Meier, 2003; F. Mackay & Waylen, 2009).

In this dissertation I use Feminist Historical Institutionalism (FHI) to explain female under-representation in Brazilian state legislatures, combining established Historical

Institutionalist theoretical and methodological tools with the assumption that political institutions are inherently gendered. A FHI analysis provides important insights into the nature of Brazil's political institutions, allowing for the contextualization of results from empirically based analyses and an overall better understanding of what affects female under-representation in the country.

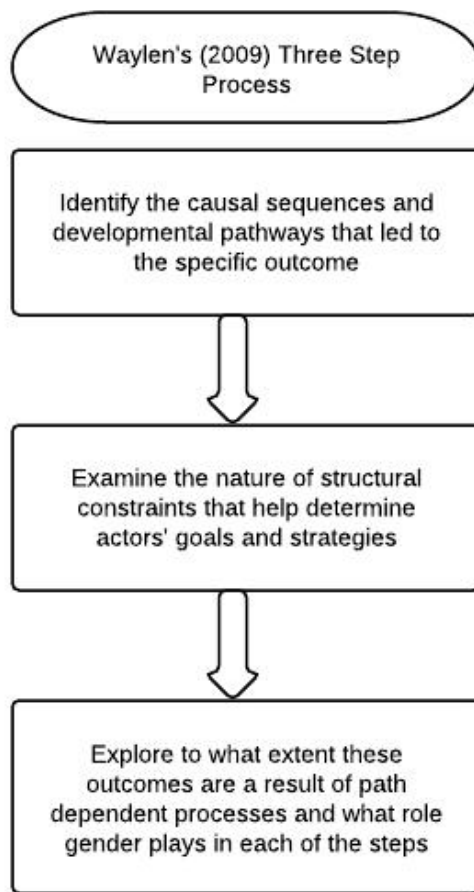
While scholars have used institutionalist approaches to explain issues surrounding gender and politics before (Htun & Jones, 2002; Htun, 2005; Krook, 2006; Weldon, 2002, 2006), the concept of a Feminist Historical Institutional approach is new and very few works can be identified explicitly as FHI (Borchorst & Freidenvall, 2010; Mackay & Krook, 2011; Waylen, 2009). Therefore, there are few guidelines in place on how to proceed with research focusing on this approach. This dissertation uses the guidelines established by Waylen (2009) and Mackay and Krook (2011) to explain the lack of women in electoral politics (Chapter 3) and the limited success of the quota law in Brazil (Chapter 4). As with other FI works, the goal is not to pick the aspects of HI that fit this research and apply them uncritically to a research question. The goal is to create an approach that truly complements, transforms, and enriches Historical Institutionalism methodology by outlining the critical role gender plays in the development of political institutions (Kenny, 2007; Kenny & Mackay, 2009; Mackay & Krook, 2011).

Historical Institutionalism is concerned with historical processes, the causal relationship between different institutional structures (formal and informal) and actor behavior, and the importance of systematic and contextualized comparisons as the key to sound research (Collier and Colier, 2002; Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Steinmo et al., 1992). A Feminist Historical Institutional approach adheres to the tenets of HI while bringing gender to the spotlight. To do so researchers must first identify the causal sequences and



developmental pathways that led to a specific historical outcome; they must then examine the nature of structural constraints that help explain actors' goals and strategies. Finally, one must explore to what extent these outcomes are a result of path dependent processes and what role gender plays in each of these three steps (Waylen, 2009).

Figure 2.1. Waylen's Three Step Framework



Waylen's (2009) three step framework provides a systematic and comprehensive way to introduce gender to Historical Institutionalism research without changing the theoretical and methodological paradigms established by previous HI literature (Collier and Collier, 2002; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Sanders, 2006; Steinmo et al., 1992; K. Thelen, 1999). By actively exploring the connection between gender, institutional change, and actor behavior, FHI connects

specific processes and outcomes to gender while maintaining it within well-established paradigms in comparative politics research.

Historical Institutionalism looks at the past to explain institutional development (change and/or inertia) and actor behavior. It emphasizes process over time, the impact of institutions on individual interests, and the importance of time in the development of institutions (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Sanders, 2006). In this dissertation I focus on three key HI concepts: path dependence, critical junctures, and institutional layering. These three concepts are central to understanding how history matters in the creation and evolution of political institutions (Collier & Collier, 2002; Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002).

Path dependence refers to the self-enforcing processes in a political system; to the factors responsible for the establishment, maintenance, and change of political institutions (Collier and Collier, 2002; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Sanders, 2006; Steinmo et al., 1992; K. Thelen, 2003). In other words, the concept of path dependence refers to how certain factors can influence the development of institutions in ways that makes deviating from a certain “path” very difficult. Path dependence is essential to institutional stability, as authors argue that when institutions are created and legitimized by political actors (civil society, politicians, and political elites) the rules of the game become self-reinforcing, consequently influencing future actor behavior. In other words, political institutions, once established, exert an auto-correlative effect on outcomes.

By focusing on formal and informal aspects of the political system, a FHI approach illustrates the ways in which institutions are influenced by gendered relations in the political system (Chappell, 2006; Waylen, 2009).<sup>8</sup> The main goal of FHI is to include gender in the study

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to reiterate that by gendered relations I mean that male and female political actors (as a group) possess distinct characteristics in regards to their place in the political system, and this

of institutions in a way that elucidates the impact specific factors have on the development of political institutions, and how gender interacts with these factors to affect the “path” of institutional evolution (Chappell, 2006, 2010; Fiona Mackay & Krook, 2011; Waylen, 2009). In other words, FHI analyses must explain path dependence and institutional development by creating detailed analyses of the way that gender influences formal and informal institutional structures, how the fluid negotiation of gender norms can influence institutional development, and how the relationship between gender and institutions creates systems that are resistant to change.

Path dependence centers on the precept that changes in political institutions become less likely as processes become normalized. Such processes are reinforced or challenged at key historical moments, or critical junctures, leading to institutional consolidation or innovation/change. A critical juncture is defined as a period of significant historical change that triggers feedback processes reinforcing institutional structures (Collier & Collier, 2002; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002). By pinpointing these critical junctures, HI scholars define how political institutions are influenced by specific historical events; how actor behavior changes before, during, and after these events; and how previous feedback processes interact with the changes that happened because of such historical events (Collier & Collier, 2002; Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003; K. Thelen, 2003). In other words, critical junctures (historic moments) lead to the reinforcement or change in political institutions, consequently influencing how

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difference affects the decision-making process of political actors (relations). I further argue that, in regards to female representation, the relationship between rights (*de jure*) and real access (*de facto*) to political representation varies greatly between genders (in Brazil and in most societies) and must be investigated (see also Celis, 2008; Paxton, 2008). FHI’s goal is to make these relations more central to the study of historical institutionalism, incorporating gender to the in-depth discussion of path dependence. Therefore, FHI is a complement to HI that was established by feminist political science scholars with the intent to show non-feminist scholars that it is possible (if not necessary) to include gender in the study of political change in a historical perspective.

political life (patterns of mobilization, institutional rules, citizens' attitudes, and actor behavior) evolves in a country or region.

The connection between critical juncture and path dependence is at the heart of Historical Institutional approaches. Clearly identifying a critical juncture and connecting it to the evolution of political institutions is a complex analytical exercise that requires scholars to create clear methods to define what constitutes a critical juncture (Collier & Collier, 2002). The idea that institutions either persist and become entrenched in the system or are abandoned is dependent on our understanding of what leads to such outcomes. Institutional change can be highly influenced by modest perturbations at early stages, but as time passes they become self-enforcing processes that are much harder to change. Therefore, understanding the connection between historical events (critical junctures) and institutional change is essential to HI scholars.

In the HI literature, discussion of path dependence and critical junctures seldom include the role of gender in this process either as a conduit for change or as an aspect of the political system that reinforces institutional dynamics. In this dissertation, I use outline the role of gender and gendered relations on the creation, change, and development of Brazilian electoral institutions. I show how critical regime change in the twentieth century has been in the development of Brazil's electoral institutions, including political parties. More specifically, Brazil's authoritarian regimes (Estado Novo in the 1930s-1940s and the military regime of the 1960s-1970s) created a system in which women were marginalized from formal politics, leading to the development of a political system that, in the return to democracy of the 1980s, was characterized by the weak presence of women in electoral politics (Chapter 3).

Another influential HI concept used in this dissertation is institutional layering. Thelen (2004, p. 35) defines institutional layering as "the grafting of new elements onto an otherwise

stable institutional framework.” Layering is used as tool by political actors to influence the “path” of specific institutions without having to dramatically alter the nature of a political system/ regime. In other words, institutional layering means to add new language and/or norms to specific, well-established political institutions with the intent to influence actor behavior. This concept is used to explain the impact of norms and ideas have on policy development (Béland, 2007; K. A. Thelen, 2004).

The establishment of the quota law is a form of institutional layering aimed at addressing gendered inequalities in the system. Brazilian electoral institutions are stable, as they changed very little even though the political environment (regimes) was volatile throughout the twentieth century. Gender quotas were established as an attempt to alter party behavior (by forcing them to nominate women), gradually changing the gender makeup of Brazilian legislative institutions. Chapter 4 explores how useful the quota law is, as a form of institutional layering, in influencing actor (party and candidate) behavior in contemporary political Brazil.

### **2.3 Conclusion: FHI, Empirical Analyses, and Women’s Representation Research**

Empirically based research has been essential to the development of the women’s representation literature, one of the few gender-related approaches to generate truly comparative research (M. Krook, 2010b; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). Because this approach is often based on empirical (statistical) analyses of political systems, it often neglects to fully explain the ways in which gender is embedded within historical processes and discourses that are specific to a given society. Recognizing these limitations does not render such analyses obsolete. In reality, the comprehensive and conscious implementation of gender in the analysis of political institutions and the contextualization of the impact gender has on relationships and institutions can contribute greatly to the progress of studies that are more empirically based. In this dissertation I

show how the contextualization of the impact of gender institutional development and change can help in the interpretation of variable oriented analyses.

Using Feminist Historical Institutionalism as the theoretical and methodological anchor, this dissertation addresses the role of gender in Brazil's legislative elections. More specifically, this dissertation applies Feminist Historical Institutionalism to show how the historical development of Brazil's political institutions influences the selection and election of female candidates today. The next two chapters lay the historical foundation of Brazil's electoral institutions, party system, and women's presence in the political system. Tracing back the origins of the Brazilian electoral system and the Vargas Era (1930- 1945) and outlining the evolution of the system up to the 1980s, Chapter 3 paints the picture of a political system in which the absence of women in elected positions was the norm. This chapter shows that as contemporary parties start to form in the 1980s, political leaders failed to address the lack of women in positions of power, maintaining explicit and implicit barriers preventing aspiring women from successful electoral campaigns.

Feminist activists and gender equality proponents obtained a small victory when, in 1995, Congress passed a gender quota law requiring parties to allocate at least 30 percent of their candidacies to women. However, as Chapter 4 shows, this institutional layering was mostly ineffective (in increasing female representation) as it did not address the root of the problem: the already gender-biased electoral system. Moreover, the enforcement of the gender quota law was ineffective as well, and parties did very little to comply with the law.

Chapters 3 and 4 show how the electoral system is biased against women and explain why the quota law has not led to an increase in women's descriptive representation. In these two chapters, FHI is used directly and the understanding of path dependence, critical junctures, and

institutional layering play a central role in explaining the low levels of women's representation in Brazilian legislatures.

The study of women in politics has evolved from almost non-existent forty years ago to a rich research agenda covering issues as varied as the women's movement, political representation, women specific policymaking, among others. The original "add women and stir" research strategy has also evolved and today feminist and gender scholars push for a gendered approach to the study of politics, or research that puts gender at the center of the study of comparative politics. That is the main goal of Comparative Politics of Gender, to make gender more mainstream, leading to research that goes beyond the study of women in the political process towards the study of the role gender plays in the relationship between male and female actors in the political system. This dissertation uses Brazilian state legislative elections as case-studies to show the importance of gender (as a concept and as a variable) in the election of women and to understanding how the electoral system reinforces gendered biases in the country.

The use of FHI, defined as a Historical Institutional approach that places a greater emphasis on the role of gender in institutional development, allows this dissertation to connect a well-established theoretical and methodological approach (HI) to new developments in gender-related research. It is the combination of empirical analyses, inferences made in Chapters 3 and 4 about the nature of the Brazilian political system, and the contextualization of empirical results and theoretical inferences through interview data that makes this dissertation a true gendered research.

While this is a study about the election of women, it is not just about women. It is about the historical legacies of male dominated political institutions and the marginalization of women as aspiring politicians. It is about the enactment of legislation aimed exclusively at diminishing

gender inequality in the electoral body that has not worked as (feminists and supporters of the law) expected. It is about the perceptions of who makes an electable candidate and how such perceptions are biased against women (or in favor of men), but how there are many aspects where male and female candidates are similar. In other words, it is about how gender influences lawmaking, party behavior, and campaign strategies in ways that make the electoral process in Brazil biased against women, favoring well established male politicians.



### **Chapter 3—One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: The Origins of Brazil's Gendered Political Institutions**

“When I was born my father was very disappointed. All he wanted was a boy so he could run for political office”

Aline Corrêa, Federal Deputy (Sardinha, 2012).

Aline Corrêa is currently on her second term as a Federal Deputy representing the state of São Paulo. Influenced by her father, she decided to pursue a career in politics. While she has been successful in her career so far, winning a Chamber of Deputies seat (twice) in Brazil's most populous state, Mrs. Corrêa believes that there is still prejudice against women in politics today (Sardinha, 2012). The political connection Mrs. Corrêa has through her father may have helped her break into politics, but for every success story there are hundreds of other stories about women struggling to win an elected seat. There is also the untold story of women who, while extremely qualified, never run for elected office in Brazil. In Brazil, as in most countries, the political elite is made up mostly of wealthy individuals, labor union leaders, and sectors of society that have held political power for generations (Pippa Norris, 1997; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008). Historically, women have been unsuccessful in obtaining and/or maintaining political power in Brazil. This chapter shows how political institutions, electoral rules, and political parties influence the under-representation of women to legislative positions in the country.

In this chapter I trace the history of women's under-representation in Brazil from the early twentieth century until the mid-1990s to address gender inequality in legislative politics. Focusing on path dependence as an explanation for women's under-representation, I argue that Brazil's political institutions evolved in a way in which women as a group were excluded from most positions of power. More specifically, I show how the political dynamics of the twentieth

century led development of present-day electoral and party procedures. The historical marginalization of women from formal politics is a consequence of government policies that kept women from formal politics and party strategies that reinforced the secondary role of women in Brazilian politics. I define the Vargas period (1930-1945) as the critical juncture setting the tone for women's under-representation in the twentieth century. I then trace the evolution of women's presence in politics in the country focusing on four distinct periods, outlining which aspects of the political system helped shape the current political system, characterized by a biased against and constant marginalization of female politicians.

This analysis starts with the Vargas period (1930 to 1945), paying special attention to the women's suffrage movement and the establishment of *Estado Novo* (1937)—an authoritarian regime led by then democratically elected President Getúlio Vargas. I then focus on the three periods of regime change in the twentieth century—the brief democratic period between 1945 and 1964, the military regime of the 1960s and 1970s, and the return to democracy (1980 to 1996)—to show how electoral rules, party behavior, and women's place in society/politics interact to create the gendered political system seen today in Brazil.<sup>9</sup>

The literature on women's representation places an emphasis on the nature of Brazil's electoral rules, especially the open-list proportional representation (PR) system, as the main reason why women are under-represented in legislative politics (Alves, 2010; Araújo, 2001, 2003, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; C. Araújo & J. E. D. Alves, 2007; Jones, 1998, 2009; Rangel, 2009; Thames & Williams, 2010). Open-list PR systems are notorious for being beneficial to established political elites and detrimental to newcomers, including female politicians. The emphasis on electoral rules is warranted. However, that alone cannot explain why the presence

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<sup>9</sup> In this sentence I define Brazil's political system as gendered in the sense that women are constantly marginalized and consequently under-represented in electoral politics in the country.

of women in Brazilian legislatures is lower than in any other country using a similar electoral system (see Table 3.2).

I argue that understanding under-representation of women in contemporary Brazilian electoral politics requires going beyond the "rules of the game" as they exist today. In particular, one must understand how gender has been a basis for political disenfranchisement throughout the twentieth century, starting with the establishment of *Estado Novo* in 1937 and concluding with the resumption of competitive party politics in the 1980s.<sup>10</sup> I show that the limited formal (political) space given to women by political parties (and authoritarian regimes) throughout the twentieth century helped lay the foundation for the current female under-representation in electoral politics. Throughout the twentieth century, authoritarian regimes consciously barred women from positions of power, and party elites more subtly disempowered women by relegating them to "gender appropriate" roles. Even today, as Brazilians have become more accepting of gender equality, these historical inequalities persist because the electoral system severely punishes newcomers who lack political capital, essentially freezing in time these gender inequalities from the past.

The evolution of the electoral system was characterized by the limited presence of women in electoral politics, and as parties began to appear in the 1980s this limited presence worked to keep women away from formal political power. The low presence of women in formal politics, reinforced by electoral strategies of the 1980s, is a consequence of the overt exclusion of

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<sup>10</sup> Women were disenfranchised from politics throughout most of modern history. It was not until the end of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth centuries that women started to win the right to vote. The suffrage movements of the early twentieth century led to unprecedented political victories in which women were, in most countries, allowed to vote for the first time (Harper, 1907; Oldfield, 2003; Ramirez, Soysal, & Shanahan, 1997). The advent of women's suffrage and other social/institutional changes happening in the early twentieth century led to the (modest) entrance of women into politics in a number of countries. I argue that in the case of Brazil the period in which women were awarded the right to vote was followed by a critical period of female marginalization in electoral politics (discussed in detail throughout this chapter).

women from the political arena, especially during the authoritarian periods (1934-1945 and 1964-1980). Throughout both periods women's issues and female formal presence in politics were overtly (through violence and coercion) and subtly (through reinforcement of gender stereotypes) suppressed, leading to the "normalization" of a political system devoid of a female voice. In other words, the evolution of the Brazilian political system led to the development of an electoral system in which gender discrimination became institutionally embedded and women face visible and invisible barriers to win an elected seat.

This chapter is divided as follows. Section 3.1 explores path dependence, discussing its application under Historical Institutionalism while acknowledging the role of gender in the process. Section 3.2 outlines the presence of women in politics from the 1930s until the return to democracy in the 1980s. Section 3.3 focuses on the role of electoral rules in the marginalization of women in politics, arguing that blaming the open-list PR system as the main reason why Brazil has so few female politicians fails to acknowledge the historical context in which the system was established. Section 3.4 elaborates on the role of path dependence as an explanation to the marginalization of women from politics in Brazil. I pay special attention to how electoral rules interact with political regimes, political parties, and women's role in society to create and recreate gender dynamics that place women at a disadvantage when running for political office. The section concludes by briefly discussing the political environment in 1995, showing that the quota law was proposed and implemented as a way to address the inequalities present in Brazil's contemporary political system.

### **3.1 Brazilian Electoral Rules in the Twentieth Century**

In most countries, women's electoral participation in the twentieth century was a consequence of drastic institutional changes, including the introduction of women's suffrage, the

complete overhaul of electoral structures, changes in political regimes, and more recently the implementation of quota laws. I focus on a critical juncture in Brazil's political history (the Vargas period of 1930 to 1945) to show how the legacies established during that period led to the evolution of a heavily gendered political system that still marginalizes female politicians today.

Path dependence is characterized by processes that follow a critical juncture, triggering feedback mechanisms that reinforce the recurrence of a particular pattern in the future (Collier & Collier, 2002; James Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002). I argue that the Vargas period, defined as the critical juncture, sets the tone for female marginalization in Brazil. This fits the description of a critical juncture as a period of significant change that occurs in a distinct way in the country and produces distinct legacies (Collier & Collier, 2002, p. 29).<sup>11</sup> As this is a single country case study, I focus on the distinct ways in which the Brazilian political system evolved into the gender biased system seen today. However, the experience of other countries also helps establish the impact and importance of a critical juncture. The historical period ranging from the mid-1920s to the mid-1940s is an important period for gender-related studies as many countries awarded suffrage to female voters, changing the political dynamic in very distinct ways. In most countries, suffrage marked the beginning of women's presence in electoral politics, and its evolution in each country is characterized by specific historical moments that define the rise of female politicians. As suffrage expanded in the world and women began to enter formal politics, countries began to change in different ways. While some countries

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<sup>11</sup> Collier and Collier (2002, p. 782) define critical juncture as "a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries, and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies." The Vargas period is defined as the sole critical juncture (in regards to female under-representation) of the twentieth century. Even though the country experienced four regime changes during the past century, the establishment of electoral rules and governmental actions marginalizing female formal representation during the Vargas period were influential in creating the distinct legacy of female under-representation in Brazil.

established systems that are more receptive to female politicians (such as the Scandinavian countries), others created systems in which women continued to be marginalized.

Brazilian political institutions, including electoral and party structures, have embedded gender discrimination in the decision-making rationale of political actors. Today, the highly competitive (and costly) nature of electoral campaigns lead parties to favor established politicians or newcomers with potential to raise the funds needed to win an election (see Ames, 1995; Ames, 2001; dos Santos, 2007; Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009; Samuels, 2001c, 2001d). This emphasis on candidates with “political capital” (see Chapter 5) tends to exclude women as a group, as most of them have limited access to campaign resources and even fewer are established political actors. This marginalization of female politicians is a consequence of a system that has historically kept women on the fringes of political power. Since the Vargas period and throughout the twentieth century both formal institutions (electoral rules, party structures) and informal structures (norms and ideas regarding women’s place in society) reinforced the exclusion of women from electoral politics. The two authoritarian regimes repressed social movements, including the women’s movement, limiting the political impact of civil society during almost half of the twentieth century. Without strong support from civil society, women’s position in society and in the political system did not improve significantly until the return to democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This lack of support led to the development of a party structure that kept women marginalized and outside positions of leadership. Therefore, when the country returned to democracy in the 1980s, electoral rules (the open-list PR system especially) reinforced biases against women established during previous political regimes, and political parties continued electoral strategies that undermined women both as aspirants and as candidates. Even as societal norms changed in post-authoritarian Brazil and the population

started to see women as viable politicians, the rigid electoral structure kept women at a competitive disadvantage when vying for an elected position.

### **3.2 Women's Presence in Brazilian Politics: From Suffrage to the New Democratic Period of the 1980s**

Brazilian women conquered the right to vote in 1932, after over fifty years of efforts by women in the emerging urban middle class of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hahner, 1980, 1990). In 1934, only one woman was elected to Congress (Carlota Pereira de Queiros), while two women were nominated to advise the commission that was to prepare the preliminary draft of the new Constitution (Besse, 1996; Verucci, 1988). Suffrage and the access to education were the biggest issues proposed by the women's movement in early twentieth century Brazil, and discussions of women's descriptive representation were not an important part of the political discourse at the time. After suffrage was obtained in 1932, very little was done to advance women's rights, and the women's movement did not flourish as a strong political force until the 1970s. Hahner (1980) posits that during Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo*<sup>12</sup> (1937-1945) the feminist movement, like most other organized groups, was 'smashed' by the government. Between 1945 and 1964—a short period of democratic government—women maintained a marginalized position in the Brazilian political landscape. Hahner (1980, 1990) explains that political parties limited women to sex-segregated sectors that tended to reproduce and reinforce the traditional gender roles, limiting the role of women in party politics. During that period, few women ran for office and even fewer were elected. Women were blocked from national political institutions, as evidenced on Table 3.1. At the local level it was still possible to achieve some level of success,

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<sup>12</sup> *Estado Novo* is the term given to Getúlio Vargas' dictatorial rule. The period is characterized by an authoritarian regime that centralized political power, suppressed most forms of protest, and eliminated elections and the Congress (Hahner, 1980).

but even that success was very limited.<sup>13</sup> At that time the majority of women who were successful in politics, either at the local, state, or national levels, were members of well-established political families or the wives (and widows) of established politicians (Pinheiro, 2007).

Women's electoral presence was low between 1945 and 1964, and maintained itself at low levels throughout the authoritarian regime that took power after the 1964 coup. The military authoritarian regime centralized power in the hands of few military leaders (all men) and suppressed all types of organized movements, including the women's and feminist movements that had started to gain power after 1945. Because of the strict and violent suppression of opposition movements that took place in the period between 1964 and the mid-1970s, women's movements organized themselves as a voice not only against gender inequality but also against the social injustice and political oppression of that time.<sup>14</sup> However, given the government's strong stance against social movements and intentional demobilization of the population, the demands of women's movements were not heard, and their influence was limited to the fringe opposition forces present during the period (Alvarez, 1990). Even if women's movement leaders wanted to campaign for increased women's representation in government, the limited access to the formal political system made it impossible for their voices to be heard.

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<sup>13</sup> There is limited data on the election of female politicians to local and state legislatures during this time period. The literature points to the fact that these elections were less important and less competitive than national elections. But more importantly, at the local level and state level political families had even more power to nominate their own members, including wives and daughters, increasing their reach at the local level and keeping politics in the family (Pinheiro, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> During the dictatorship period women aligned with the Catholic Church and organized within the church structure. Most of the demands made by newly established women's groups during for most of the authoritarian period fell within the demands and goals established by the church. This connection with the Church allowed such groups to flourish but clearly limited the scope of demands made by such women's groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Alvarez, 1990; Baldez, 2003).



Table 3.1  
Number of Women in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate<sup>15</sup>

Year	Women Deputies (Percentage)	Female Senators (Percentage)
1934	1(0.3%)	0
1946	0	0
1950	1 (0.3%)	0
1954	3 (0.9%)	0
1958	2 (0.6%)	0
1962	2 (0.6%)	0
1965	6 (1.8%)	0
1970	1 (0.3%)	0
1974	1 (0.3%)	0
1978	4 (1.2%)	0
1982	8 (1.6%)	0
1986	26 (5.3%)	0
1990	29 (5.75)	2 (2.4%)
1994	32 (6.2%)	6 (7.4%)
1998	29 (5.6%)	6 (7.4%)
2002	42 (8.1%)	5 (6.1 %)
2006	46 (8.9%)	10 (12.3%)
2010	44 (8.6%)	13 (16.1%)

Even as the authoritarian regime relaxed, leading to the democratic transition period of the late 1970s and early 1980s, women's movements were marginalized from the decisive political debates of the time. As Alvarez (1990, p. 109) points out, "women's movements in Brazil not only had to contest the reactionary gender ideology of a military regime but also had to contend with less-than-progressive gender ideologies adhered to by sectors of the radical opposition." The author contends that, as a consequence of this dynamic, the women's movement refrained from addressing more *radical*, gender specific issues such as violence against women and reproductive freedom, because they feared they would lose the much needed support from the church and other Left and Center-Left organizations. During this period, women's descriptive representation was defined within the regime's ideology as a radical issue,

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Avelar (2001) and Pinheiro (2007). Additional data from "Representação Política (2012).

because adding more women to the electoral political process would change the political landscape dramatically in the country. Moreover, the leadership of opposition movements was largely male, and women were confined to the same sex-segregated sectors that were assigned to them during the democratic period of 1945 to 1964. In other words, women's descriptive representation was not a priority for either the authoritarian regime or the opposition forces. Because the women's movement was dependent on both for their existence, the "controversial issue" of women's increased presence in the direct political process was not a central political goal at the time.

Because of this double oppression from the military regime and the male dominated opposition forces, Brazilian women's groups saw political parties and elections as irrelevant to their "genderic transformational project," meaning the formal electoral process would not answer their gender-specific political demands (Alvarez, 1990). Moreover, until the opening of the political system in the early 1980s, women were not considered viable candidates by the political parties and the military regime. It was not until 1982, when multipartidarism re-emerged in Brazil, that more women ran for elected office. At the national level, an unprecedented 42 women ran for a seat in the National Congress, but only eight—or 1.6 percent of the seats available—of them were elected (Pinheiro, 2007). A few of the new parties included female candidates and feminist groups in their campaigns and policy discussions. For example, PT and PMDB both established a women-specific institution within the party structure, allowing the women's movement and political leaders to create a connection between gender-related issues and the party. However, the support for women's issues was driven more by electoral strategy than by feminist sympathy, and most parties moved away from "radical" ideas such as increased female representation (Alvarez, 1990).

Parties paid lip service to women-related issues, but women were still discriminated against within the party structure and had very limited access to resources. Most new parties reproduced aspects of gender inequality in their organizational structures and in their political platforms. Alvarez (1990, p. 176) argues that “the political ‘courtship’ of recently mobilized female constituencies sometimes perpetuated or reinforced power imbalances between the sexes by replicating and institutionalizing unequal gender power imbalances within the party organization themselves.” Women entering the party structure were expected to make coffee, answer phones, and do other tasks that clearly reinforced the idea that women served while men lead.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the new political system maintained gender “political” roles that were part of the Brazilian political system throughout the twentieth century. More importantly, the debate about women’s descriptive representation was not a key feature of the political discussions that dominated this initial period of the new democratic system.

While elements of the patriarchal structure of the authoritarian regime were reinforced during the dawn of political parties in the 1980s, by the middle of the decade women became more active in electoral politics. In 1986, 26 women were elected to the Chamber of Deputies, the body that would double as the constituent assembly who wrote the 1988 Brazilian Constitution. This increase in women’s representation was a result of the slow but steady strengthening of women’s movements throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s and the push by new and traditional political families in Brazil to elect more women.<sup>17</sup> Pinheiro (2007) posits that

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<sup>16</sup> Four of the female politicians I interviewed were involved in party politics since the early 1980s and corroborate this idea. Even in leftist parties, where gender equality discussions were more open, women were relegated to these “secretarial” jobs, leaving the real political debates to men. The separate women’s institutions within the party structure (Women’s Secretaries) served as a separator that marginalized female party members and women’s issues from the mainstream debates of the mid and late 1980s.

<sup>17</sup> It is unclear why the political families of the 1980s started to support female politicians. I argue that as Brazilian society changed, the uncertainty of a newly established political system allowed such

38.5 percent of the women elected in 1986 came from families with well-established political capital. Slowly, women started to enter formal politics in Brazil, but the patriarchal structures of political parties posed serious limitations for women without established political capital to enter electoral politics. After the sharp increase in women elected to the national legislature in 1986, only a few more women were elected in the next two election cycles—1990 and 1994.

### **3.3 Electoral Rules: Is the Open-List PR System the Root of All Evil?**

The type of electoral system is an important factor in explaining women's representation in a comparative perspective. There is broad consensus among scholars that the list variant of proportional representation (PR) is more propitious for the nomination and election of women (Schmidt, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009). Norris (2004) posits that women are almost twice as likely to be elected in a proportional representation system when compared to majoritarian (winner takes all) systems. Moreover, scholars posit that gender quotas tend to be more efficient when coupled with an electoral system (such as list PR) that provides the institutional tools needed to enforce quota mandates (Htun & Jones, 2002; Matland, 1998; Matland & Taylor, 1997; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009). However, list proportional representation is a broad category with complex possibilities and alternatives (Lijphart, 2004). More specifically, there are clear distinctions between closed-list PR, the system widely accepted as most propitious for the election of women, and open-list PR, the system used in Brazil.

Scholars overwhelmingly agree that closed list-PR is superior to open-list PR as an institutional system to support gender quota policies and to increase women's descriptive representation (Htun & Jones, 2002; Jones, 1998, 2010; Jones & Navia, 1999; Krook, 2009;

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families to increase their reach in electoral politics. While male candidates are still more desirable (as the story of Dep. Aline Corrêa shows), political families realized that by supporting female family members they could increase their presence in electoral politics without having to reach outside the family structure for support.

Krook & O'Brien, 2010; Schmidt, 2009; Tremblay, 2008). In general, proportional representation means that each voter casts his/her vote for one person or party, and the number of votes a certain party gets determines their seat allocation in the legislative body. The main difference between closed-list and open-list PR is that in a closed system the party decides the rank order of candidates prior to the election. Voters choose the party, and not specific politicians. In an open-list PR system, citizens vote for specific candidates within parties, taking away party control over candidate rank ordering. While there are variations that create a mix between closed and open-list PR, Brazil uses an open-list system where citizens cast a vote for one candidate. In order to be elected, a candidate's party must receive a substantial number of votes (competing with other parties) and the candidate must receive enough votes to put her/himself within the threshold of seats allocated to her/his party or coalition (intra-party competition).

Table 3.2 Open List PR, Quotas, and Women's Representation<sup>18</sup>

Country	Quota Type	1997	2003	2008	2012
Brazil	Legislative Candidate Quota	6.6 %	8.6%	9%	8.6%
Chile	Voluntary Party Quota <sup>19</sup>	7.5%	12.5%	15%	14.2%
Finland	"Soft" Quotas <sup>20</sup>	33.5%	36.5%	41.5%	42.5%
Peru	Legislative Candidate Quota	10.8%	17.5%	29.2%	21.5%
Poland	Legislative Candidate Quota	13%	20.2%	20.4%	23.7%
World	-----	12%	14.9%	18%	19.9%

At the national level, few countries—Finland, Chile, Peru and Poland—use an electoral system as “open” as Brazil's (Nicolau, 2006b, 2007). Of these five countries, three (Brazil, Peru,

<sup>18</sup> Source: Women in Parliaments: World Regional Averages (2012). 1997 is the first year in IPU's women in parliament database.

<sup>19</sup> The three biggest parties in Chile implemented quota provisions in their bylaws, but these provisions are rarely enforced (IDEA, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Finland's quota law is confined to local executive positions and state committees (non-elected positions). Parties have established quota provisions, but they tend to be indirect and focused on party leadership and not elected positions (Krook, Lovenduski, & Squires, 2009).

and Poland) implemented legislative gender quotas. And yet, Brazil ranks lower than any of these countries when it comes to women in the national legislature. Therefore, the type of list PR and the presence of quota laws cannot, by themselves, explain the variation in levels of women's representation between these four countries. In Brazil, the low level of women's representation at the national level is replicated on the local and state levels, where 12.5 and 12.8 percent of women respectively are currently holding elected office in these institutions across the country. This low percentage of women in all levels of legislative politics shows that women face similar barriers when entering electoral politics in Brazil.

The nature of Brazil's political system when analyzed in a historical perspective provides a more nuanced answer to why women are underrepresented. Brazil's electoral system has received limited direct attention from scholars, as most studies focus on other aspects of the political system (Ames, 1995; Mainwaring, 1991; Nicolau, 2006b; Samuels, 1999). Moreover, none of the previous studies takes gender into consideration when analyzing Brazil's electoral institutions. The starting point for this historical analysis is the country's electoral system, which is distinct in many ways. It is the longest lasting open-list PR system in the world, in place for over sixty years, surviving a coup d'état, a long lasting authoritarian regime, and the return to democracy. Brazil is the largest country to use such a system,<sup>21</sup> a characteristic that combined with the country's large electoral districts make for a system where representation can be distorted (Nicolau, 2006a, 2006b). Moreover, other characteristics of the system (such as the possibility of coalition formation, the large number of political parties, and the simultaneous election for majoritarian/executive positions<sup>22</sup>) have led to the development of an electoral

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<sup>21</sup> Brazil's population in 2010 reached 195 million. Its population is larger than the combined population of all other countries using open-list PR (Chile: 17 million; Finland: 5 million; Peru: 29 million; and Poland 38 million).

<sup>22</sup> At the local level, City Council elections coincide with mayoral election. State and national level

system that poses unique obstacles for aspiring female politicians.<sup>23</sup> But how has the Brazilian electoral system evolved since its original implementation in the 1930s? And why is today's electoral system biased against women? To answer these two questions we must understand the political evolution of Brazil, the development of its contemporary party system, and the role gender has played in this process.

### **3.4 Path Dependence and Gender: The Exclusion of Women from Electoral Politics**

Scholars emphasize the importance of electoral rules, party structures, and women's position in society (including formal politics) on female representation (Beckwith, 2007; Caul, 1999; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Jones & Navia, 1999; R. E. Matland, 1998; R. E. Matland & Taylor, 1997; P Norris & Inglehart, 2005; Schmidt, 2009; Thames & Williams, 2010; Tremblay, 2008). In this section I show how these three aspects are directly related to Brazil's lack of female politicians. More specifically, I show how electoral rules remain almost unchanged throughout the twentieth century even as political regimes change significantly, how the role of women in civil society/formal politics is directly influenced by policies from the Vargas period, and how the relationship between electoral rules and women's place in society/politics help shape the electoral strategy of the political parties created in the 1980s. The overt exclusion of women from formal politics during the authoritarian regimes reinforced the lack of female leadership in politics, leading to the creation of political parties that continued to exclude women from electoral politics. Therefore, electoral rules were gendered in the sense that they were established and reinforced in a period when women had limited access to formal politics, leading to a vicious cycle in which women were not seen as qualified candidates because they were not

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elections are conducted at the same time, where voters choose their State Assembly representative, Chamber of Deputies member, Senator as well as their Governor and President.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapters 5 and 6.

present in the political system and they could not enter the political system because they were not seen as qualified candidates.

A static look at these three aspects is not enough to show why the current Brazilian electoral system and party structure marginalize women. Showing that the Vargas Period (1930-1945) was the critical juncture, I argue that formal and informal institutions established/reinforced during this period led to the evolution of a political system that marginalizes women from formal politics in Brazil. During the Vargas period (1930-1945) the ruling political elite (through Getúlio Vargas and his policies) established the open-list PR system, forcibly kept women's political movements from developing, and reinforced gendered notions that kept women marginalized even as they entered party politics.

When the open-list PR system was implemented, women's presence in electoral politics was practically non-existent. Two years after the implementation of the open-list system and three years after the victory of women's suffrage, Getúlio Vargas' established an authoritarian regime, known as *Estado Novo* (New State). The new government sought to establish a political project that emphasized economic development while maintaining social stability. Women's suffrage fit the programmatic goals of Getúlio Vargas as it included more avenues for civil society to interact with the government but also allowed the government to exert control (through populist policies) of a greater number of citizens (Loewenstein, 1973; D. Williams, 2001). As societal relations were changing dramatically during the early twentieth century in Brazil (and across the world), political elites and the Vargas government sought to control the discussion about gender roles in the country (Besse, 1996; Wolfe, 1994a). During the period between 1930 and 1945 the Vargas administration took an active role in (re)defining gender roles by



prescribing appropriate male and female educational curricula, employment opportunities, public roles, familial responsibilities, sexual behavior, and characters traits (Besse, 1996).

Leading up to women's suffrage in 1932 a number of (male and female) progressives were pursuing gender equality and women rights, especially in areas such as education and labor. The push for equal education, or at least increased presence of women in schools, led to the rise in female literacy from 19.9 percent in 1920 to 34.1 percent in 1940.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the Vargas government sought to maintain a grip on education, in an attempt to protect what the government viewed as appropriate behavior for men and women (Besse, 1996). For example, in 1940 a decree (Decree-Law 2.072) made civic, moral, and physical education obligatory for all schoolchildren. Moral education sought to render boys and girls capable of their mission as family men and women. As Besse (1996, p. 123) explains, the focus of moral education was almost solely on girls, where the law explicitly described how girls must be educated to like housework in preparation for them becoming mothers and wives, while no discussion of boys' roles as fathers and husbands were present in the law.

The language of Decree-Law 2.072 shows that the Vargas government was especially interested in controlling gender norms in Brazil. The economic and social changes of the early twentieth century led the Brazilian political and economic elite to pursue an idealized view of "traditional" gender norms, in which men earned wages and women took care of household chores (Wolfe, 1994a). Vargas pursuit of social stability was directly influenced by this traditional view of gender norms, implementing laws that "protected" women's role as a traditional mothers and wives. One example is Decree-Law 21.417 of 1932 that forbade

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<sup>24</sup> Male literacy in was 28.9 percent in 1920 and 42.3 percent in 1940. Therefore, in 1940 the gap between literate men and women remained constant during this period, indicating that the efforts to increase female literacy were not enough to make an impact on the literacy gap in the first half of the twentieth century (Besse, 1996).

companies from allowing women to work between ten o'clock at night and five in the morning (Besse, 1996, p. 141). By enacting laws such as Decree-Law 21.417 and fostering the support of traditional elites and male dominated workers union (established or strengthened during the Vargas period), the period between 1930 and 1945 is characterized by the government's overt attempt to maintain the male dominated status quo unchanged while giving women certain rights such as suffrage and access to education. In other words, the ultimate goal of such policies was to slow down the dramatic changes in gender dynamics of the early twentieth century while pretending to provide women with new social, political, and economic opportunities (Besse, 1996; D. Williams, 2001; Wolfe, 1994a, 1994b, 2010).

To maintain social stability the *Estado Novo* repressed all forms of social movements, including the then flourishing women's movement. As a consequence of this sudden repression, women were unable to lobby for increased representation in politics during this period, maintaining the same marginalized position they had prior to the success of the suffrage movement. Even if discussions of female political representation surfaced during this period, it is unlikely that a major change in the gender makeup of politicians would happen. As the Vargas government and elites sought to protect traditional values and gender norms, their views on who makes a good politician undoubtedly favored men over women.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the feminist movement of the time lacked the grassroots support needed to bring about rapid and radical changes. Carrie Chapman Catt, a suffragist leader in the United States, saw during her 1922 trip to Latin American the deep ideological polarization and extreme class inequalities of Latin

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<sup>25</sup> While research focusing specifically on societal views on female politicians is limited at the time it is possible to extrapolate from discussions about labor relations that the government and elites favored male politicians. Besse (1996, p. 140) explains that the state directed women toward occupations that required no innovation, responsibility, or authority (all important traits in a politician), while Wolfe (1994a) asserts that the state sought to protect women because they were "by nature, more fragile than men." The rhetoric of the time establishes a political system in which women are seen as not fit to pursue a political career, as they are, by nature, not fit for such duty.

American countries (including Brazil). Catt saw these as key factors hindering the organization of feminist movements, dictating the adoption of an extremely conservative agenda by feminist groups (in Besse 1996, p. 199). During this period the Brazilian party system was still in its nascent stages and political alliances were mostly established through state and regional interests, with limited alignment based on ideological tendencies (Fleischer, 2007). As these alliances and ideas spread across the country, one of the most visible characteristics was the lack of female leadership. Vargas' repression of social movements halted the political influence of the few suffragettes who had enjoyed some political success during the previous decades, and at the time formal political leadership consisted completely of men. In other words, the dawn of the modern political system in Brazil, and the embryonic stages of the current electoral rules (specifically the open-list PR model) occurred in a period in which women's access to political office was non-existent and women's movements outside the formal political structure were silenced by the political regime.

The Vargas regime set the tone for the marginalization of women in formal politics in Brazil. The administration sought to protect elite interests and pursued populist policies while maintaining what they saw as "traditional" gender roles. The lack of women in formal politics was reinforced by these traditional gender roles. The period also saw limited influence of political parties and an emphasis on leadership rule (epitomized in the political influence of Getúlio Vargas), providing for the embryonic stages of present-day prominence of strong individual party leadership (see Chapter 4).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on leadership rule is a feature of the Brazilian political system that predates Vargas and it relates back to the idea of *coronelismo* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Carvalho, 1997; Leal & Henfrey, 1977). However, it is under the Vargas period that the modern Brazilian political system starts to take shape, and it is Vargas' approach to leadership politics that helps establish the way party leaders would act throughout most of the twentieth century.

Gender norms have been changing since the end of the nineteenth century in many countries, and governments (and society as a whole) took different approaches in addressing these changes (Laslett & Brenner, 1989; Seccombe, 1986; J. Williams, 2001). Throughout the world, the period between 1930 and 1945 was characterized by the spread of women's suffrage, and by 1947 most European and Latin American countries had awarded women the right to vote (IPU, 2012a). In most countries, women were allowed to vote and even allowed to run for office, but they did not pursue careers in public office. For example, in the United States, few of the suffragettes of the 1920s ran for public office after they were given the right to vote. Clark (1991) argues that women saw the vote as a way to lobby male politicians or as a way to bypass elected representatives via referenda. Therefore, the Brazilian experience during this period was not much different in the sense that women all over the world were slowly awarded the right to vote but did not necessarily seek public office. One important aspect of Brazil's political history during this period is the fact that the establishment of the *Estado Novo* led to the re-definition of gender roles and repression of civil society, including suffragettes and women's groups. Vargas's repression of women's groups helped stunt the development of a strong women's movement in Brazil during this period and it kept women away from formal politics, as they did not possess the necessary political power to run (and win) a political campaign.

After the fall of Vargas in 1945, Brazil experienced 19 years of democracy that ended with the military coup of 1964. During this democratic period women continued to be excluded from political power. The open-list PR system was re-established for legislative elections and a multiparty system emerged for the first time (Fleischer, 2007; Nicolau, 2006b). Parties were still aligned mostly by regional interests, but a small number of ideologically aligned parties, most to the extreme of both sides of the ideological spectrum, started to assemble during this period

(Hippolito, 1985; Segatto, 1995). As the party system evolved, the role of women in the democratic process started to slowly change. Women began to join political parties, but they were confined to gender specific jobs and were not seriously considered for positions of leadership either within the party structure or in electoral politics (Hahner, 1980, 1990). The few women elected during this period were, as in most countries during the same period, wives and widows of well-established political figures (Gertzog, 2002; Niu, 1999; Pinheiro, 2007). At the same time, women's groups attempted to re-establish themselves after being suppressed for almost two decades. The period between 1945 and 1964 was the first time in modern Brazilian history in which women began to carve their own space within the formal political structure. Their presence was still very small and limited to positions that reinforced gender biases and stereotypes of the time (a legacy of the Vargas years), but women as a group began to enjoy a level of political engagement unprecedented in the country.

Table 3.3 Percentage of Women in Parliaments: 1945-1965<sup>27</sup>

<b>Country</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>1955</b>	<b>1965</b>
Brazil	0 %	0.9%	1.8%
Chile	0 %	1.3%	8 %
Finland	9 %	15 %	14%
Peru	0 %	4.4%	1.4%
Poland	0 %	4.1 %	12.4%
World	3 %	7.5%	8.1%

The presence of women in electoral politics was lower in Brazil than in other countries between 1945 and 1964. This period was characterized by the slow increase of female politicians in most countries. Table 3.3 shows that of the countries that use open-list PR today, Brazil experienced the lowest increase of women in parliaments during these two decades. Moreover, Brazil's numbers were much lower than the world average, showing that during this period the country began to fall behind other countries in terms of female representation in electoral

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<sup>27</sup> Source: TSE (2012), Women in Parliaments: 1945-1995 (1995).

politics. The legacy of the Vargas period kept women marginalized in electoral politics even with the return to democracy, and parties chose to exclude women from national politics, even as other countries began to slowly open the political system to female politicians.

Women's limited gains both inside and outside the formal political realm were once again crushed after the military coup of 1964. Following years of political and economic instability during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the military establishment in Brazil took over the government for what was supposed to be a brief period. This brief period turned into almost two decades. The military dissolved Congress, disbanded established political parties, forbade popular politicians from seeking office, and established indirect elections for the 1965 gubernatorial races. Under the new electoral rules, in place from 1966 until 1979, the military junta forced the country into a two-party system. According to a new rule, party organizations had to possess at least 120 Federal Deputies and 20 Senators (Fleischer, 2007). In theory, this meant that a total of three party organizations could be created, but given ideological and institutional constraints, combined with repression from the military government, only two were formed: the *Aliança Renovadora Nacional* (ARENA)—directly connected to the military regime, and the *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (MDB)—the watered down opposition movement. During this period when elections for Congress were conducted the open-list PR system continued to be in effect.

During this period of Brazil's political history, women were removed, once again, from the formal political process. At the height of the military dictatorship (1968 to 1978), only one woman was elected to Congress, down from six prior to the coup. The minimal progress women had seen during the democratic period was completely erased during the dictatorship years. It is difficult to ascertain if the limited number of female politicians at this time is a consequence of

explicit actions limiting the access of women to political office or historical under-representation combined with the suppression of women's movements and female leadership. In reality, the low number of female politicians during the authoritarian regime was likely a combination of overt exclusion, through the repression of civil society, including women's movements;<sup>28</sup> and the subtle exclusion, in the sense that well-established male politicians were preferred by military and party leaders.

Military leaders ruling the country were all men, and politicians from both parties were overwhelmingly male. A total of 12 women were elected to the Chamber of Deputies during this period, and while data on local and state legislatures is not available, scholars agree that the situation in those institutions were very similar to what was happening at the national level (Alvarez, 1990; Hahner, 1980, 1990; Pinheiro, 2007). The one positive result was the strengthening of women's movements. As the democratic transition period started in the mid-1970s, the women's movement was able to flourish. Feminist and feminine organizations<sup>29</sup> were able to thrive, and consequently played an important role in the peaceful transition to democracy of the early 1980s (Alvarez, 1990; Waylen, 1994). These groups were still marginalized from more "mainstream" opposition during this period, but their ability to meet and organize planted the seed for the development of strong feminist organizations in the early 1980s.<sup>30</sup> In other

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<sup>28</sup> The authoritarian regimes of the late twentieth century in Latin America (such as the ones in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) were characterized by the repression of civil society and the lack a clear policy regarding gender equality. This meant that most of the demands made by the women's movement in Brazil during in the 1960s and 1970s went largely ignored by the authoritarian regime, and repression of civil society included the repression of women specific groups (Alvarez, 1990; Baldez, 2003; Molyneux, 1998; Waylen, 1994, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> Alvarez (1990) divides Brazilian women's groups of the period between feminist and feminine. Feminist groups were mostly aligned with left leaning organizations and were influenced by the second wave feminist movement in the United States. Feminine groups were characterized by their conservative nature and their intent to maintain women's role in Brazilian society untouched. Both types of groups were influential in the 1970s, but they disagreed in many, if not most, issue areas regarding gender equality and women's access to political power.

<sup>30</sup> The rise of feminist groups is also a consequence of the return of exiled women in the late 1970s

words, the military regime period (1964 to 1979) was characterized by the consolidation of open-list PR as the electoral system used to elect legislators; a military rule that suppressed citizens, social movements, politicians, and political parties; an artificial two-party system dominated by men and devoid of female leadership; and the surprising development of women's groups that would become instrumental in gender-related debates during the 1980s and 1990s.

Table 3.4 Percentage of Women in Parliaments: 1970s and 1980s<sup>31</sup>

<b>Country</b>	<b>Early 1970s</b>	<b>Late 1970s</b>	<b>Early 1980s</b>
Brazil	0.3 % (1970)	1 % (1978)	1.5% (1982)
Chile	8.7%% (1973)	NA <sup>32</sup>	NA
Finland	16.5% (1970)	26 % (1979)	30.5% (1983)
Peru	NA <sup>33</sup>	NA	NA
Poland	15.9 % (1972)	20.7 % (1976)	23 % (1980)
World	NA	10.9 % (1975)	12.7% (1985)

Across the world, second-wave feminism began to gain traction and the number of women elected to parliamentary position continued to slowly increase (P. Norris & Inglehart, 2001; D.T. Studlar & McAllister, 2002). In Latin America, the rise of dictatorships led countries to seek similar policies regarding women in politics. Waylen (2003) asserts that the authoritarian regimes of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile made no clear attempt to mobilize women politically. However, both Argentina and Chile elected women at higher rates during the 1940s and 1950s. Because women were already a part of the formal political structure, the military governments

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(Baldez, 2003; Molyneux, 1998). As the military regime began to allow civil society to organize and ideas from abroad arrive in Brazil through these exiled women, more “radical” women's groups (those proposing major changes to the Brazilian patriarchal structure) were able to organize outside the previously established civil society structure (Catholic Church) and start a more vocal debate about gender inequality in the country (Alvarez, 1990; Baldez, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Source: TSE (2012), Women in Parliaments: 1945-1995 (1995).

<sup>32</sup> National Congress was dissolved in 1973.

<sup>33</sup> National Congress was dissolved in 1968.



kept women involved in formal politics at higher levels than Brazil. In the case of Brazil, women were not present in the political system prior to the 1964 coup, leading the military to support mostly men who were previously involved in the political process and would support the policies established by the military regime (Alvarez, 1990; Cardoso, 1980; Waylen, 2003). As women's presence in politics increased in other regions of the world, women were excluded from civil society and formal politics in Brazil, reinforcing the reality of an electoral system that was almost completely devoid of female leadership.

As the country began its return to democracy, the open-list PR system had been normalized as the way to vote legislators into office. The military still exerted control over the political system, giving up power in 1985 when José Sarney became the first civilian president since 1964. In the initial period (1980 to 1985) legislative elections were held democratically. The rule that established the two-party system was abolished in 1979, leading to the creation of five new political parties (Kinzo, 1980, 1988; Kinzo & D'Alva, 1993). As the rules became clear and new political alliances were established, Brazil evolved (or devolved) from a moderate multiparty system into an "exacerbated" multiparty system by 1988 (Fleischer, 2007). Trying to win women's vote, most parties opened space for women activists and ran on political platforms that focused on women-related issues such as divorce laws and domestic violence (Alvarez, 1990). Parties also opened room for some women candidates, leading to the election of 8 women in to the Chamber of Deputies in 1982 and the unprecedented election of 26 women in 1986 (Avelar, 2001; Pinheiro, 2007).<sup>34</sup> However, the space opened for women was symbolic at best. Parties established women's caucuses within their institutional framework but continued to keep

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<sup>34</sup> According to Sarti (1988, p. 47), the victory of most women in 1986 was not connected to their previous political experience. The author suggests that some came from the feminist movement that was starting to become more powerful at the time, while others capitalized on their family connections to win an elected seat. In other words, the women elected in 1986 were have not risen through the political ranks, but used other types of political capital to win a Chamber of Deputy seat.

women marginalized, relegating them to the same positions and duties held by women prior to the 1964 coup (Alvarez, 1990). Laisy Moriére, PT's National Women's Secretary, exemplifies this marginalization:

I joined PT in 1981 and I have ever since been involved in executive positions within the party, first at the municipal level, but not always involved in the women's secretary. However, ever since I got involved in politics I have been involved with the "gender problem." Because I am a woman in an area dominated by men, I have always been conscious about these issues. Since its beginnings in the early 1980s PT has been vocal about women-related issues such as reproductive rights and sexual rights. However, women were somewhat excluded from the majors discussions during that time (Interview by author conducted 06/04/2011).

Women had finally carved a space in the Brazilian formal political structure, but they were still not seen as a serious political force. Ms. Moriére goes further by saying that even nowadays women (as a group) continue to be excluded from major discussions in most political parties, stating that in PT "we [women] are in there. [We are] Fighting to actually be heard, but we are actually in there" (interview by author conducted 06/04/2011). Women were involved in party discussions at that time, but very few were invited to run for political office. Six female politicians (including Ms. Moriére) interviewed in Brazil between 2008 and 2010 started their political careers during this period (early 1980s), but none of them became involved as candidates until after 1988, when the discussions surrounding gender inequality and women's representations began to gain traction among academics, activists, and politicians.

The strength of Brazilian women's groups grew during the 1980s and 1990s. As women continued to be relegated to marginalized positions within party structures, reinforcing the long established male-dominated political system, the few women who were able to transcend the gender barrier in electoral politics joined forces with the flourishing feminist movement to actively campaign for increased women's presence in electoral politics. First, they fought for

equal rights under the law, and they were victorious when the 1988 Constitution established complete full equality between genders. Then, women politicians, led by Marta Suplicy (a Federal Deputy who used her husband's political capital to enter politics) began their campaign for the establishment of the quota law, culminating with the 1995 signing of the law.

By 1996, when the quota law became a reality, the Brazilian political system was stable. The open-list PR model had, by then, become the well-established model of legislative election. Electoral rules and the political environment led to the creation of over 40 political parties, 20 of those with seats in the National Congress. The combination of the open-list system with the ultra-multiparty system has led to the development of an electoral system in which parties have limited power, campaigns are candidate centered and benefit incumbents, and winning candidates must run costly campaigns (Ames, 1995, 2001; Nicolau, 2006b; Nicolau & Power, 2007; Samuels, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). The incumbency advantage and the rising cost of campaigns are two reasons why the Brazilian political system hampers the election chances of most women. Since the system is dominated by male incumbents and the ability to raise campaign funds is associated with access to party resources, the lack of women in leadership positions within parties created a system that puts most women at a clear disadvantage when running for office.<sup>35</sup>

During the period between Brazil's democratization and the establishment of the quota law in 1995 the number of women elected to parliamentary positions continued to increase across the globe. Chile and Peru had, like Brazil, started a democratization period that would last most of the 1980s and 1990s. Poland, also going through a democratic consolidation period, seemed to maintain the presence of women close to the average world levels. Finland, together with other Scandinavian countries, established itself as a country where women are consistently

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<sup>35</sup> Chapter 5 explores in detail the factors influencing the election of candidates to state legislatures.

elected at rates higher than 30 percent (IPU, 1995). At this point all of these countries have adopted the open-list PR system and yet the variation in levels of women's representation is quite stark between them. The authoritarian legacy in Latin America kept Brazil, Chile and Peru at levels below the world average, but as the decade continued Brazil began to lag behind these other countries, maintaining female representation embarrassingly low at six percent. In Brazil the combination of an authoritarian legacy that kept women marginalized in formal politics, the establishment of a multiparty system that benefited established politicians, and the slow evolution of women's movements in the 1980s led to the low level of female representation in national politics, a phenomenon that was replicated at the local and state levels.

Table 3.5 Percentage of Women in Parliaments: 1980s and 1990s<sup>36</sup>

<b>Country</b>	<b>Late 1980s</b>	<b>Early 1990s</b>	<b>Late 1990s</b>
Brazil	5.3 % (1986)	7 % (1994)	6.6 % (1998)
Chile	5.8 % (1990)	7.5% (1994)	10.8 % (1998)
Finland	31.5 % (1987)	39 % (1991)	33.5 % (1998)
Peru	5.6 % (1985)	6.7 % (1990)	10.8 % (1998)
Poland	13.5 % (1989)	13 % (1993)	13 % (1998)
World	12 % (1985)	11.6 % (1995)	12.2% (1998)

An analysis of the evolution of Brazilian political institutions throughout the twentieth century shows that it is only possible to truly understand why the electoral system is detrimental if we analyze other factors that have influenced the development of the country's electoral system. The Brazilian electoral system, characterized today by the open-list PR model and the presence of over 20 national political parties, is biased against women in ways that can only be specified if scholars actively connect the historical legacy of regime change, the evolution of the

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<sup>36</sup> Source: TSE (2012), IPU (1995).

party system, and the development of women's movements to the lack of women in legislative politics. The establishment of *Estado Novo* and the realities of the political environment between 1930 and 1945 set the tone for what would become the multiparty and hypercompetitive system of the 1980s. The legacy of gender role traditionalism and suppression of women's groups allowed for the establishment (or maintenance) of a political elite almost devoid of female leadership. As Table 3.6 shows, it wasn't until the re-establishment of democracy that parties started to see the rise of female leadership, and even in the present period most parties possess a small number of notable female leaders. Today, none of the 31 parties registered has a woman president, showing that women continue to be marginalized from leadership positions within the party structure (TSE, 2012).

The continuous military intervention and suppression of women's rights (both during *Estado Novo* and the 1964-1980 military regime) reinforced women's marginalized position in electoral politics in Brazil. Looking at the four regime changes of the twentieth century it is possible to see that open-list PR is detrimental to women in Brazil not because it is explicitly exclusionary, but because women have been consistently excluded from the "political game" throughout the twentieth century. When they finally do begin to be considered for elected positions, they enter a highly competitive system that reinforces perceptions on the "unelectability" of female candidates.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 5.

Table 3.6 Party Leadership through the Years<sup>38</sup>

Time Period	1945 to 1964				1964 to 1979	
Party	PSD	PTB	UDN	PSB	ARENA	MDB
Notable Leaders	9	8	9	7	17	8
Female Leaders	0	0	0	0	0	0

Time Period	1979 to Present <sup>39</sup>										
Party	PP	PT	PMDB	DEM	PSDB	PSB	PPS	PSOL	PCdoB	PV	PSTU
Notable Leaders	7	14	18	14	15	11	8	8	9	7	5
Female Leaders	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	1	2
% Female	29%	14%	5%	7%	6%	18%	25%	25%	33%	14%	40%

### 3.5 Conclusion

The Vargas period led to the development of a political system where two specific aspects are held mostly constant throughout the twentieth century: the type of electoral system (open-list PR) and the marginalization of women from formal politics. Even as regimes change these two aspects remain mostly unchanged. The marginalization of women from formal politics is accomplished in different ways throughout the period, but women's involvement was directly influenced by the overt suppression of women's movements during the *Estado Novo* and the ways in which gender roles/norms were reinforced in party/government policies.

The suppression of political rights during the two authoritarian periods (1937 to 1945 and 1964 to 1979) halted the entrance of women into formal politics and the development of well-established women's movements outside party structures. It was not until the end of the military regime that women began to gain space in the political sphere, mostly through women's groups, still outside the electoral spectrum of the political system. The late development of political parties coupled with the practically non-existent presence of women in positions of

<sup>38</sup> Adapted from Faber (2010). The author provides a description of parties throughout Brazilian political history, providing the name of notable leaders in each party. These notable leaders were (and are) the individuals who historians, political scientists, and pundits agree were (and are) key figures within each party.

<sup>39</sup> Five of the parties profiled by Faber (PDT, PTB, PCB, PR, and PRB) possessed no notable female leaders during this period.

power during the creation of contemporary political parties led to the development of a party system that not only was male dominated but that reinforced gendered stereotypes cultivated in the 1940s and 1950s. These political developments reveal a system in which path dependence created an unwelcoming environment for female politicians. The combination of an electoral system that benefited incumbents and well-established political elites, political regimes that suppressed women's rights and access to political office, and a party system that reinforced gender biases established and maintained throughout twentieth century Brazilian political institutions helped create a system in which women are marginalized as a group and continue to struggle to carve a space in electoral politics.

Parties paid lip service to women's causes but have been reluctant to promote the increased presence of women in politics, and it is arguable that one of the reasons for this reluctance is that male politicians would likely lose their positions and consequent influence in the party and the political system. Established politicians are wary of strong newcomers, and in this zero-sum game, where promoting more women may mean diminishing influence for male politicians, most parties have chosen not to actively promote women as a group. The lack of female leadership, a consequence of direct and indirect attacks on women's groups and reinforced gendered roles in formal politics, made it harder for women as a group to succeed in politics when democracy was reestablished in the 1980s. The open-list PR system and the high number of political parties only exacerbate the barriers found by aspiring female politicians, making it almost impossible for women as a group to succeed in electoral politics unless Brazil implements institutional changes to address this issue.

In 1995 Congress passed legislation establishing a candidate quota mandate for political parties. The main goal of the law was to increase the presence of female candidates, in hopes that

an increase in candidates will lead to an increase in elected female legislators. While the number of women elected rose slightly since the implementation of the quota law, the law cannot be seen as successful (by gender equality proponents) given that the presence of women in legislative positions increased, on average (between local, state, and federal levels), less than three percent. Why has the quota law failed to significantly increase the number of women elected to state legislatures in Brazil? The next chapter explores the implementation of the gender quota law, outlining the main reasons why the law led to such a limited rise in the number of female politicians. Building from the arguments established in this chapter, I focus on the institutional characteristics of Brazil in 1996 and the nature of party strategy for state legislative elections to show that the implementation of a gender quota law in Brazil was not sufficient to address gender inequality.



## **Chapter 4. The More it Changes, the More it Stays the Same: Gender Quota, Electoral Rules, and Women in Contemporary Brazilian State Assemblies**

The Brazilian political system is characterized by a historical marginalization of women from formal politics. This situation is a consequence of regime changes that undermined women's political power, political parties with little incentive to add women to their leadership, and an electoral system that benefits male incumbents and hinders the entrance of female politicians. In 1995, energized by the ideas spread after UN's Fourth World Women's Conference (the Beijing Conference) and supported by local women's groups, the few women in Congress—dubbed the “lipstick caucus”—were able to lead the way in to propose and implement a gender quota law in Brazil. While the final language of the law was not what Congresswomen and feminist leaders had hoped for, the implementation of the quota law was nevertheless a political victory for gender equality proponents. However, 17 years after the implementation of the law, women still struggle to carve a space in Brazilian electoral politics.

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the Brazilian quota law, focusing both on the 1995 implementation of the law and the 2009 mini-political reform that changed important aspects of the law. Paying special attention to the relationship between electoral rules and party behavior, I argue that the implementation of the quota law in 1995 was not, by itself, sufficient to significantly change party strategies for the nomination and election of state legislators. The decentralized nature of party politics, the overwhelming male dominance in party executive committees, the lack of women in positions of leadership within the party, and electoral rules that are detrimental to female candidates make for a system that, even with the quota law, punishes female politicians.

Furthermore, I show that changes to the gender quota law implemented in 2009 were designed to increase the nomination and election of female candidates, but provided for little

improvement in the number of women elected to State Assemblies in Brazil. Parties remained generally uncommitted to providing women, especially female newcomers, with the resources needed to win an election bid. Relying on interview data collected in two states (Goiás and Distrito Federal), I show that Brazilian electoral rules and political institutions prevented the quota law from succeeding in the way most gender equality proponents expected. It resulted in a limited increase in the number of female candidates and barely affected the number of women elected to political office.

This chapter is divided as follows. The first section provides a brief introduction to gender quota laws, their sudden rise in the mid-1990s, and their relationship to increased levels of women's representation in the world. Section 4.2 focuses on the implementation of the Brazilian quota law in 1995 and its impact on the nomination and election of women in state legislative elections between 1998 and 2006. I argue that the nature of Brazilian political institutions led to the establishment of a law that had very limited enforceability, significantly hampering the prospect for behavior change, even with the implementation of a gender quota. Section 4.3 demonstrates how the 2009 mini-political reform and the changes related to women's representation show an attempt to address some of the key flaws in the 1995 quota law. Changing the language of the law to avoid the ambiguity regarding reserved seats and adding provisions that force parties to actively support aspiring female candidates, the revised law has the potential to increase the number of female candidates. The results of the mini-political reform, however, were not enough to significantly increase the number of elected female state legislators in the 2010 elections. This was because most parties were not prepared to drastically change their election strategies. They added more female candidates without providing them

with increased support. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the future of the quota law in Brazil

#### **4.1 Gender Quota as a Tool to Increase Women's Representation**

Scholars divide quotas into three types: party quotas, reserved seats, and legislative quotas (Krook, 2009; Pippa Norris, 2004). Party quotas are voluntary measures adopted by political parties committed to increase the number of female candidates and/or women elected. Reserved seat quotas, widely used in African nations, create seats that can only be filled by women, often through a separate ballot from the regular election. Legislative quotas are changes in the electoral laws or constitutions of countries that require parties to allocate a certain number of seats for women in their party tickets (IDEA, 2010; Krook, 2009). Party quotas are not a substitute for legislative quotas, and in many countries both party quotas and mandated quotas are present. According to the Quota Project (2010), 48 percent of the countries (36 out of the 77 countries in their database) have party mandated quotas but no quota law, while 16 percent of the countries have both a party mandated quota and a government mandated quota for women. Different types of quotas lead to very distinct results depending on the type of electoral system, the nature of the party structure and party system, and on the willingness of government and party officials to enforce such laws.

Since the unanimous signing of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action the number of countries with gender quotas has quadrupled. Quotas now exist in more than one hundred countries (Krook, 2009). Quotas and other affirmative action policies have helped change the gender makeup of political institutions in many countries in the past two decades. The African continent is a good example of the impact of the 1995 Beijing Conference on the implementation of gender quotas. Although a limited number of countries—such as Ghana,

Tanzania, Egypt, and Uganda—experimented with gender quotas prior to 1995, the vast majority of quotas in Africa were introduced after the Beijing Conference (A. Tripp, Konaté, & Lowe-Morna, 2006). As a consequence of the implementation of quotas in Africa, four of the ten countries with the highest proportion of women in national legislatures worldwide are now African countries, including the highest ranking country—Rwanda with 56.3 percent of women in their lower house (IPU, 2012b). Such examples of drastic increases in the number of women in national legislatures have shown that the “fast-track” model has been the driving approach since Beijing. According to Dahlerup (2006), the fast track approach rejects the idea of a gradual improvement in women’s representation, calling for the implementation of affirmative action policies such as gender quotas to increase the number of women in politics at a faster pace than the “natural” progression of electoral victories in established institutions.

Table 4.1  
Percentage of Women in National Legislatures: World Differences<sup>40</sup>

<b>Region</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Increase (1997 to 2010)</b>
Nordic Countries	36.4	38.8	39.7	40	42.1	5.7
Europe- Excluding Nordic Countries	12.3	14	15.6	17.3	19.9	7.6
Americas	12.9	15.7	17.9	20.6	22.2	9.3
Asia	13.4	14.3	15.5	16.4	18.7	5.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	10.1	12.5	14.1	17	18.4	8.3
Pacific	9.8	11.8	12.1	12.1	13.2	3.4
Arab States	3.3	3.8	6	8.2	10.1	6.8

The steps taken in the last two decades to increase the number of women in legislative positions led to a rise in the number of female politicians in most regions of the world. This rise is a consequence of affirmative action policies and quota provisions combined with the support and effort from women’s groups, both at the local grassroots level and in the international

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<sup>40</sup> Source: IPU (2012b).

sphere. However, the number of women legislators, with the exception of the Nordic countries, is still very low when considering that women comprise roughly half of the world's population.

Table 4.2  
Percentage of Women in National Parliaments and Legislative Quotas: South America<sup>41</sup>  
\*shaded cells represent years when gender quotas were used in the election process

Country	Legislative Quota Year	1990	1997	2001	2004	2008	2010
Argentina	1991	6	25	27	31	40	38.5
Bolivia	2001	9	7	12	19	16.9	25.4
Brazil	1997	5	7	6	9	9	8.6
Chile	NO	..	8	11	13	15	14.2
Colombia	1999-2001	5	12	12	12	8.4	8.4
Ecuador	1997	5	..	15	16	25	32.3
Guyana	2001	37	20	19	20	29	30
Paraguay	1996	6	3	3	10	10	12.5
Peru	1997	6	11	20	18	29.9	27.5
Suriname	NO	8	16	..	18	25.5	25.5
Uruguay	2009	6	7	12	12	12.1	15.2
Venezuela	1997-2000	10	6	10	10	18.6	17.5

Most South American countries were influenced by the Beijing Conference and implemented some type of legislative mandate quota after 1995. Today the majority of South American countries have established some type of affirmative action policy for women in elected positions (Zetterberg, 2009). Table 4.2 shows that all but two countries in the sub-continent

<sup>41</sup> Source: IPU (IPU, 2012b) and The Quota Project (2010).

have, at one point, implemented quota or affirmative action policies, and over two-thirds (eight of the twelve countries) continue to use such policies today. Brazil is one of the few South American countries in which the implementation of quota laws did not significantly change the gender makeup of the National Congress. Moreover, the country did not see a significant increase in any of the elected positions affected by the legislation (local city councils and state legislatures). Brazil's low level of women in legislative positions raises two questions that are at the center of this chapter's analysis: Is the Brazilian quota law a failure? Which factors limited the election of women even after the implementation of the quota law? To answer these questions I focus on the implementation of the quota law in the context of Brazilian electoral rules, party structures and strategies, and gendered biases that directly or indirectly affect the nomination and election of female candidates.

#### **4.2 Women Joining the Party but not Having Fun: Brazil's Quota Law From 1996 to 2006**

The quota law in Brazil is an example of what Historical Institutionalists scholars call institutional layering, adding new elements to already established (and stable) institutions with the intent to alter institutional development and actor behavior in the long run (Béland, 2007; J. Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Streeck & Thelen, 2005; Thelen, 2009). On paper, the goal of the quota law was to change the way parties select candidates, adding more women to the system and therefore changing the system gradually, without generating too much instability. At the center of the Brazilian quota law is the assumption that if parties field more female candidates, women will gradually enter the electoral process, increasing the number of viable women candidates and consequently increasing the number of elected women.

In theory, the implementation of the quota law in Brazil, given the nature of its political system (a multiparty open-list PR system), should lead to the slow increase in female candidates,

followed by an increase in elected women. In practice, that did not happen. In this section I show why Brazil has seen limited changes in the number of women elected to legislatures, focusing specifically on Brazil's State Assemblies. Keeping Waylen's (2009) three-step framework in mind, I identify the key aspects of Brazilian political institutions, how these institutions interacted with the implementation of the quota law, and their relation to the nomination and election of female candidates. I show that given Brazilian electoral rules and the nature of party politics, it is arguable that the male dominated political elite allowed the quota law to pass knowing that it would not help female candidates considerably. In other words, the quota law has worked exactly like the political elites wanted, by appeasing gender equality proponents while allowing parties to maintain their electoral (winning) strategy almost unchanged.

In Brazil, discussions regarding the implementation of some form of affirmative action policy happened almost exclusively after the 1995 Beijing Conference. Before 1995, most discussions about female representation feature only a call for more women in legislative positions (see Vaz, 2008, pp. 44-45). The first proposal for a candidate gender quota happened in 1993, but Deputy Marco Penaforte's proposal was rejected without any discussion on the issue. It is important to note that the women's movement was not involved in the debate surrounding Mr. Penaforte's proposal, as at that time the issue of women's descriptive representation was not a priority for organized women's groups. (S. Miguel, 2000, p. 24). In 1995, emboldened by the international repercussion of the Beijing Conference and backed by the now flourishing feminist movement in Brazil, female Deputies and Senators proposed for the first time the implementation of quota law for legislative positions (Álvares, 2011; S. Miguel, 2000; Vaz, 2008).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> It is imperative to express here that international pressure, especially through the Platform for Action from Beijing (United Nations, 1995), was essential to provide female representatives with the

The debate surrounding the quota law was in not without controversy, as a majority of Congress members saw with reservations the implementation of any type of affirmative action policy in the country (Álvares, 2011; Vaz, 2008). Proposals for a gender quota surfaced both in the Chamber (lower house) and Senate (upper house), with quota provisions ranging between 20 and 30 percent of candidacies.<sup>43</sup> However, the initial debate surrounding a quota law focused on the constitutionality of the law, and most efforts (by the “lipstick caucus”<sup>44</sup> and women’s groups) were centered in this debate (S. Miguel, 2000). In August 1995 the law regulating Municipal elections included a candidate quota provision for women, requiring parties to allocate 20 percent of their candidacies to women. The implementation of the quota law added, for the first time, an institutional provision attempting to address gender inequalities in Brazilian electoral institutions. The signing of this piece of legislation established a clear institutional change to Brazil’s electoral rules that gender equality proponents hoped would lead to a considerable rise in the number of women elected to legislative positions (C. Araújo & J. E. D. Alves, 2007; Pinheiro, 2007; Rangel, 2009; Vaz, 2008).

The law introduced in 1995 required parties to allocate a 20 percent candidate quota for women in local government elections across the country. In 1997, the legislation was revised to

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necessary courage and know-how to argue for the quota law. Moreover, the organized Brazilian feminist movement, having CFEMEA as its main representative, was also directly involved in the debate surrounding the quota law, and was essential in providing Congress members sympathetic to the change with tacit support for the legislation (Álvares, 2011; S. Miguel, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> The law project presented in the Chamber was sponsored by Marta Suplicy and signed by 26 female Deputies (84 percent of all female Deputies). This proposal called for a 30 percent candidate quota for all legislative positions. The law project presented in the Senate was proposed by Júnia Marise and signed by all five female Senators, and proposed a 20 percent candidate quota for the upcoming local elections (S. Miguel, 2000; Vaz, 2008).

<sup>44</sup> The “lipstick caucus” (*bancada do batom* in Portuguese) is a multi-partisan organization comprised of all female Congress members. The idea for the creation of such a group started before the election of the Constituent Assembly (1988) and it was spearheaded by women’s groups directly involved in the process (civil society and party secretariats). The group was considered an informal organization inside Congress until 1999, but today it is a well-organized institution that determines the priorities of gender-related policymaking in the Brazilian Congress (Pietá, 2012). During the quota debate in 1995 the lipstick caucus was instrumental in drafting and discussing the quota law (S. Miguel, 2000).



require a 25 percent women candidate quota for State Assemblies and the Federal Chamber of Deputies elections, and in 2000 the law called for an increase to a 30 percent candidate quota at all levels of government (IDEA, 2010; Vaz, 2008). The final language of the law, as revised in 2000, was quite different than the original proposals by Deputy Suplicy and Senator Marise, as it included other institutional changes proposed by (mostly male) Congress members in an attempt to appease the requests from political parties that did not see the law in a positive light (see below). However, the passing of the quota law was a landmark for gender equality proponents in Brazil that included a loud minority (the lipstick caucus) influenced and supported by a stronger women's movement (especially through policy-oriented groups such as CFEMEA) and international pressures (a consequence of the 1995 Beijing Conference and the Platform for Action).

In state legislative elections, the implementation of the quota law led to a slight rise in the number of female candidates as well as elected women between 1994 and 1998. In 1994, 7.7 percent of all State Assembly seats were filled by women while 7 percent of the candidates running for that position were women. In 1998, the number of women candidates rose to 12.6 percent while the percentage of women elected rose to 10.2. Neither the number of candidates nor the number of elected women rose close to the 20 percent level established in 1996.

In terms of institutional layering, the main objective of the quota law (in theory) was to change party behavior by forcing parties to nominate more female candidates. The goal was to implement the law in the context of pre-existing electoral rules (namely the open-list PR system) in hopes to immediately increase the presence of female candidates and gradually increase the female presence in legislative positions. If behavior change was the ultimate goal of the quota law, then it did serve its purpose, to a certain extent. The law did force parties to actively look for

women candidates and it has, undoubtedly, led to the beginning of numerous political careers.

Eliana Pedrosa, a three-term state legislator in the Federal District and second highest voted candidate in 2010, started her political career thanks to the quota law.

My brother was invited to run as a candidate in the Federal District (in 1998). It is common for new party members to ask family members to join the party and he made me join the party. He always invited me to party meetings and I went a few times. When election time arrived no women volunteered to be candidates so they asked me if I wanted to have my name on the ballot. At that time I was not involved in politics at all, I always criticized what politicians were doing and didn't even know the name of the state's Governor. But my brother insisted, arguing that I would be able to bring at least 800 votes to the party ticket and hopefully help elect one of their candidates, so I accepted and started my campaign. As the campaign evolved I became more involved in the whole process, and on Election Day I was surprised to learn that I was elected with over 11,000 votes. I felt overwhelmed with the responsibility, but decided to build a legislative team with experience to help me learn more about the legislative process. This is how I entered politics (interview by author conducted (07/26/2010)).

However, Eliana Pedrosa's story is a rare case of female success in a first attempt as a candidate. Moreover, Mrs. Pedrosa was an experienced professional (an entrepreneur and college professor) with a family already involved in politics. Her story shows that parties were actively looking for women, mostly as a way to fill spots and help well-established politicians with a few hundred party votes to improve their chances of reaching the threshold needed to win seats. Therefore, while parties did change their behavior by actively looking for women candidates, party leaders were still skeptical about the potential of these new candidates. Most women attempting to enter politics were not as successful as Mrs. Pedrosa. Oraida Abreu was a candidate for City Council in the city of Goiânia (Goiás state) in 1996 and she portrays party behavior as less than helpful:

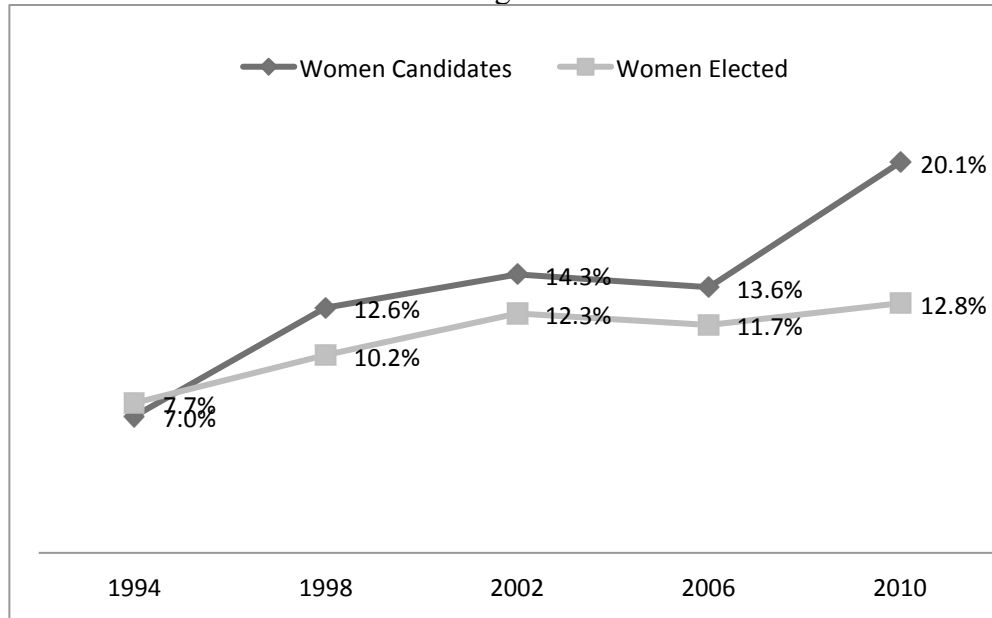
I was invited by a well-established female politician to run, because of the quota for women, but no one explained how the campaign process actually worked. They [the party] offered us workshops and booklets, talking about the importance of women in politics, but there was no frank dialogue, not even from those who

invited me. It seemed to me that everything was natural [easy], all you had to do was open a committee, make the material, organize a group of supporters and start asking for votes (interview by author 05/07/2009).

Ms. Abreu's experience is, according to scholars (Matos, 2011; Pinheiro, 2007; Rangel, 2009), more common than Mrs. Pedrosa's experience. Women were (and still are) invited to join the party, then asked to run for office, but party leaders provide them with little information about or support for the campaign process. Women involved in the political process, including six female candidates interviewed and PT's National Women's Secretary Laisy Moriere, believe the goal of most of these nominations is not to increase the number of women elected but to increase the number of votes the party or coalition ticket receives in order to elect one of their highest voting candidates, mostly men directly involved in the party leadership.

The quota law was an attempt to address some of these inequalities present in the political system. But what happens when you establish quota provisions in an open-list PR system? Jones and Navia (1999) posit that gender quotas are not as effective in open-list PR systems as in closed-list PR systems. Because open-list PR does not rank order candidates prior to the elections, countries using this system experience a diminishing rate of return in the number of women elected candidates. This phenomenon holds true in the elections for Brazilian state legislatures. Between 1994 and 1998, the number of elected women increased at a similar rate as the number of female candidates, while in 2010 even with a significant increase in the number of female candidates the number of elected women rose only marginally.

Figure 4.1<sup>45</sup>  
Female Candidates and Women Elected  
State Legislatures



More recently, Thames and Williams (2010) contend that party centered systems—seen in closed-list PR systems—elect more women than candidate centered systems—a characteristic of open-list PR systems. According to the authors, candidate centered party systems create incentives for candidates to pursue personal votes, increasing intra-party competition and diminishing the election chances of women (Thames & Williams, 2010, p. 1576). This lack of success stems from the fact that in open-list PR systems voters select a specific candidate and not a party ticket, leading to competition between and within parties. In Brazil, institutional designs that hamper the efficacy of gender quota mandates in open-list PR, combined with a historically gendered party system, results in an electoral system that, even with the implementation of the quota law, still marginalizes female politicians. More specifically, the language of the law (and the electoral rules that changes together with the quota law), the high number of parties, the high number of candidates each party can nominate, the possibility of coalition formation, and the

<sup>45</sup> Source: TSE (2012).

decentralized nature of party control are all characteristics that undermine the quota law implemented in 1995.

Table 4.3 Key Factors Influencing the Low Number of Female Politicians

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Gender and Party Behavior</b>
Language of the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of enforcement mechanisms leads to limited action</li> <li>• Congress changed candidate limit, allowing parties to nominate more candidates and bypass the need for more female candidates</li> </ul>
High number of parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large number of parties, most led (“owned”) by male politicians</li> <li>• Very few parties provide support specifically for women</li> </ul>
High number of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parties can nominate up to 1.5 times the number of seats available, limiting the impact of the quota law</li> <li>• Parties tend to promote only a handful of their candidates, leaving dozens of them with little tacit support</li> </ul>
Possibility of coalition formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parties can join coalitions and not have to worry about the quota provision</li> </ul>
Decentralized nature of party control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local decision tends to support established elites (leadership)</li> <li>• No active recruiting strategy until the year before election</li> <li>• Lack of training for women newcomers</li> </ul>

Scholars and activists have long proposed that the language of the law is the main reason why the law has not led to a significant increase in elected women. First, the law asked for parties to reserve 30 percent of their candidacies for women,<sup>46</sup> but this did not mean that parties needed to have 30 percent of women candidates on their ticket. By reserving seats, the law only indicated that the party or coalition could not run a full slate of male candidates, but if they did not fill all their allocated candidacies they could run on an all-male ticket as long as these candidacies did not fall into the “reserved” quota for women. The scenario shown on Table 4.4 exemplifies the way this loophole works. In a fictitious state where each party can field up to 30 candidates, of the four parties competing only one actually reaches the 30 percent threshold, but only one of the four parties is “breaking” the law. Parties B and C are still following the rule

<sup>46</sup> The law states that no party can have more than 70 percent of candidates of the same gender, meaning that it must reserve 30 percent to the gender underrepresented in the ticket. In other words, parties cannot run all women or all men in their campaigns. However, no party has showed any inclination to have more women candidates than men in Brazil.

since they did not field all 30 candidates they are allowed to, and even though Party C fields no female candidate, they are not breaking the law because they only have 20 (66 percent of reserved seats) male candidates.

Table 4.4  
The Quota Law Loophole: Reserving Seats

Party	Total Candidates (Maximum Allowed: 30)	Women Candidates	Legal?	Reasoning
A	30	10 (33%)	YES	Surpassed the threshold
B	18	3 (16%)	YES	Candidacies “reserved” for women”
C	20	0 (0%)	YES	Candidacies “reserved” for women”
D	30	8 (26%)	NO	No candidacies “reserved,” did not reach threshold

The reserved seat clause would not be as problematic for women if the allowed number of candidacies per party and the number of parties competing were low. However, the Brazilian political system is set up in a way that practically makes the quota law moot. The number of candidacies a party can field changed in 1996 when the quota law was signed.<sup>47</sup> Before 1996, parties could have as many candidates as the number of seats available in each specific election. Therefore, in states with a 24 seat State Assembly each party could field up to 24 candidates. Because most parties were not favorable to the establishment of the quota law, the compromise found was that they would be able to field more candidates (1.5 times the number of seats) in each election (Alves & Cavenaghi, 2009; Araújo, 2009; Pinheiro, 2007). In states where parties could field 24 candidates for State Assembly elections before the quota law, they could now field up to 36 candidates.

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<sup>47</sup> During debates in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate both in 1995 and 1997, party leaders made it clear that the quota law would only pass if the number of candidates each part could field also increased (S. Miguel, 2000; Vaz, 2008). In essence, party leaders knew that if the number of candidacies increased parties would not have to change their selection strategies drastically, most likely adding women only as a formality but not really giving them the proper support needed to win a seat.

Because parties need to only “reserve” candidacy spots for women, and given the high number of candidates each party or coalition can have for State Assembly election, parties can easily run a ticket without one single woman in their ticket and yet be following the quota legislation. For example, in the state of Espírito Santo, where the State Assembly consists of 30 members, parties can run a ticket with 31 male candidates and no women candidates and still be “legal” based on the quota law. As Rangel (2009) correctly puts it, the same law that establishes quotas provides a neutralization mechanism to prevent it from increasing the number of women candidates. Moreover, the number of parties competing in the elections provides for another obstacle for aspiring female politicians. Brazil’s electoral court—Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE)—counts a total of 29 parties nationwide in 2011. Therefore, in the case of State Assembly elections, if parties were to field all possible “reserved” seats, a total of 1044 candidates would be competing for 24 seats in smaller states, and over 4000 candidates would compete for 94 seats in São Paulo state.

The possibility of forming a coalition also creates difficulties for aspiring women. Coalitions are formed at the state level in Brazil and it is normally a decision made by each party. Coalitions are used by small parties to “survive” the election in an attempt to elect a larger number of candidates. Large parties utilize coalitions as a tool to mobilize against opposing parties and as a tactic to obtain more television time for majoritarian candidates (Nicolau, 2006b).<sup>48</sup> When a coalition is formed, the reserved seat rule is then applied to the whole coalition and not to each party individually. This way smaller political parties can join a coalition with no female candidates and take advantage of both the higher number of “reserved seats” a coalition

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<sup>48</sup> In Brazil, parties can only use radio and TV time allocated to them by the electoral courts, and the time allocated to each majoritarian candidate (mayor, governor, and president) is determined by the size of the coalition.

can field (2 times the number of seats instead of 1.5 for parties not in a coalition) and the number of female candidates other parties in the coalition bring to the ticket.

The quota law implemented in Brazil in 1995 was an example of institutional change that created limited change in actor behavior. The law was written, after great deliberation in Congress, in a way that provided parties with a number of loopholes to limit their effort in fielding women candidates. As the candidate quota provision became a reality, party leaders made sure that the law would only pass if the law also changed to provide parties with more candidacies during an election, virtually rendering the quota provision moot (S. Miguel, 2000; Rangel, 2009). Moreover, the lack of a credible enforcement mechanism made the quota law irrelevant, as parties did not have to worry about being punished for not following the rule. Rhetorically, parties supported the idea behind the quota law, most likely because of pressures and civil society and the international community. Numerically, parties added a few more women in each election, without making a positive effort to reach the proposed 30 percent of female candidates. In reality, parties paid lip service to the issue of women's representation without actively promoting the election of women.

Institutional rules shape actor behavior. However, actor behavior can also influence rule creation and change (or inertia). Because the Brazilian political system evolved in a way that kept women marginalized up until the late 1980s (see Chapter 3), party leadership and consequently party behavior has evolved to (subtly) reinforce the marginalization of women. Since the quota law was implemented because of pressure from female politicians, civil society, and international organizations, party leadership was not as sympathetic to the change and had little incentive to alter their strategies and behavior significantly. By supporting the quota law but assuring that other institutional arrangements were made (increase the number of candidates each



party can field, assuring that there was no enforcement mechanism embedded in the law), it is arguable that the quota law worked just the way party leaders wanted: by adding the quota provision but not challenging the status quo of electoral politics in the country.

The nature of party politics is also important. First, political parties are extremely decentralized and structured in a way that gives state and local leadership sole control of the nomination process and legislative campaign strategies. Even strong national parties like the Worker's Party (PT) have very limited control over the decision making of state and local leadership, especially when it comes to decisions that only influence state and local elections, such as the nomination process for state legislative candidates. Second, local and state party leaders (overwhelmingly male) control the party's five to ten member executive committees/councils and thus have virtually complete control over the nomination process and campaign strategies. Given the executive control of party decisions in the hands of a limited few, the Brazilian party system creates barriers to political newcomers, resulting in the exclusion of most women from the election process.

Scholars have limited knowledge about the selection process of candidates and party strategies for supporting candidates (Álvares, 2008; Nicolau, 2006b). Because party leadership is decentralized, each of the 29 parties may have different strategies and leadership styles in each of the 27 states. While some parties—such as bigger “national” parties such as PT, PMDB and PSDB and notably two smaller leftist parties: PC do B and PSTU—try to coordinate as much as possible at the national level and have actively attempted to address gender inequality, the final decision on candidate nomination is still made by a handful of state leaders. Scholars speculate that in most cases the party executives (five to 10 people) are the sole decision makers when it comes to naming candidates, and party conventions are only used to formally approve those

names. The party leadership (executive), where decisions are being made about candidates and about party support during campaigns, is often dominated by one or two strong political leaders.

When asked about the role of the party executive in the election of candidates, Virmondes

Cruvinel, a local elected politician in the state of Goiás stated that:

Normally the party executive is comprised of five people. Today anyone can be chosen (to be a candidate), but normally it is the party executive that makes this decision. I was in a party of “chiefs”<sup>49</sup> and the party executive did not listen to the party leadership, they only listened to the party “chief.” In my current party there is a discussion between the executive and other party leaders. But there are parties (not just his previous party, but others as well) where the party leader puts his son, his wife, and his dog in charge of the party executive, making him the de facto decision maker (interview conducted by author 01/15/2012).

Mr. Cruvinel states, in jest, that party leaders nominate their sons, wives, and even dogs to pack the party executive. However, it seems that wives are not necessarily the first option when choosing a party executive. Information on party executives is not readily available for all political parties in all states. In the two states where I conducted interviews (Goiás and Federal District), only one party (PSDB-DF) out of 18 that provided information about their executive online (both in Goiás state and the Federal District) had one woman in their party executive (one of the five positions with decision making power). All other parties had no woman in their direct leadership. My interviews with party leaders and candidates indicate that the lack of women in party leadership is a nationwide problem that affects all parties.

Because the decisions regarding candidacies are made solely by the party executive, state conventions, where parties officially make the decision about who will run, become a mere formality. While conducting fieldwork in the state of Goiás and the Federal District I was able to attend four state party conventions. In all of them the party executive council named all

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<sup>49</sup> The politician uses the word *cacique* to describe the party leader. *Cacique* means Indian Chief in Portuguese, and it is a word widely used to describe these supreme leaders of political parties in Brazil.

candidates without an active discussion about “who’s in and who’s out.” In only one instance, at PT’s state convention in Goiás, the party executive council acknowledged the low number of female candidates and asked party members to allow the executive council to “continue looking for female candidates” until the formal deadline to register candidates. Table 4.5 further shows the limited number of women in positions of leadership in state politics, where most parties have no women in the executive committee.

The decentralization of party decision making, the dominance of a few leaders in the nomination process, and the lack of a continuous project to promote the ascension of well-qualified female candidates are seen as key reasons to why there are so few female state legislators. Laisy Moriere, PT’s National Women’s Secretary, says that:

PT and other parties only *remember* that we need female candidates two months before the election. So they say to us: “So, can we find some women?” I respond: “That’s not how things work, if you have would told us two years ago you needed more women we could do something, now, two months before the elections, it is hard to get that done” (interview by author conducted 06/04/2011).

The sentiment is shared by other female candidates as well. Lucia Rincon, Social Sciences Professor at Goiânia’s Catholic University and Goiás state legislative candidate through PC do B, believes that “party leaders talk about electing more women, but they don’t seem sincere” (interview conducted 08/22/2010). Luzia de Paula, state legislative candidate in the Federal District through PPS, sees a “lack of political maturity by party leaders, a lack of commitment to women” (interview conducted 07/27/2010). Eliana Pedrosa, state legislative candidate in the Federal District through DEM, also complains about party leadership in general:

It is hard to undo a historical process through a candidate quota. In Brazil most parties have “owners.” With the exception of PMDB, PT, and a couple of other parties, all the other ones are “owned” by a small minority. So the men running the party do not think about women. They don’t encourage women to join the party, to participate in party decisions. They only start thinking about women when it gets close to election time and they need women, the rest of the time they could care less (about women) (interview by author conducted 07/26/2010).

Because parties have “owners” and sub-national strategy rests in the hands of a select few party leaders, official campaign resources and party support tends to go to a select group of candidates. Most parties run a large number of candidates, but prioritize those close to the party leadership. This decision concerning who to support is, most of the times, completely arbitrary. That is what André Dutra, state legislative candidate in the Federal District through PDT, believes happened with his party in 2010. When asked if the party provided appropriate support for his candidature during the campaign, Mr. Dutra argued that “there was no support whatsoever. What happened was a complete centralization of resources in the campaign of the party’s Regional President, who was also running as a State Assembly candidate. The party resources were directed completely towards him and another candidate” (interview conducted 12/05/2010).

If such centralization of resources can happen in a party with a clear national programme (such as PDT) in a fairly important state, the reality in other states and in smaller parties (such as the ones described by Mr. Cruvinel and Mrs. Pedrosa) may be worse than in the Federal District. The secretive nature of the selection process, coupled with the arbitrary (not based on national strategies) allocation of resources, hurt most candidates who are not members of the established political elite, regardless of gender. However, given that the Brazilian political system is male dominated (as established in Chapter 3), party decisions regarding candidacy nominations and tacit support to candidates benefit male candidates more than it does female candidates.<sup>50</sup>

After analyzing the five factors previously described as the key elements in explaining the low presence of women in state legislatures in Brazil, it is possible to paint a better picture of how each factor contributes to this low presence. As Figure 4.2 shows, the language of the law, combined with the high number of parties and the high number of candidates each party can

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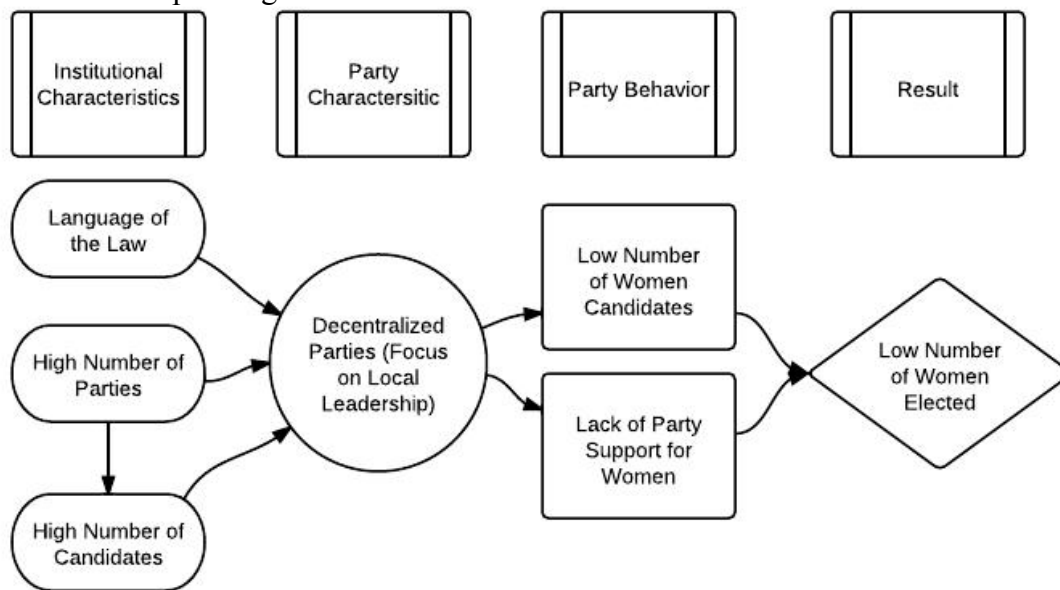
<sup>50</sup> Chapter 5 explores this argument further by focusing on individual level data, including campaign finance.

nominate creates a system where political parties must generate very distinct strategies to win the most possible seats in each election. When thinking strictly about the numbers, it would be advisable (rational) for parties to nominate the highest possible number of candidates (male and female), and provide support to a significant number of these candidates in order to obtain more list votes and consequently elect the highest possible number of candidates. However, the reality in most Brazilian states is different. Because parties have “owners,” meaning that the executive leadership has considerable control over the party, their strategy tends to focus on maximizing the number of votes for a limited number of candidates who have a direct connection with the leadership, limiting party-wide efforts to nominate and support women candidates. Because electoral rules provide enough loopholes, party leaders pay little attention to female candidates, searching for them only when the election is near. When women are found and placed on the party list, only the ones with previous connections to the party leadership (through family connections or through pre-established political ties) will be able to garner enough support to run a successful campaign, leaving the majority of women (and a large number of men as well) with little or no support.

In the analysis of women’s descriptive representation in Brazil since the implementation of the quota law, the connection between gender and institutions is clear. First, the quota law was implemented under a political system biased against women, where, as Chapter 3 shows, women were marginalized both inside and outside the party structure. Moreover, the law was passed only after political leaders decided on a compromise, increasing the number of possible candidates a party can nominate and keeping the language of the law ambiguous. This development can be attributed to a political system in which the absence of women is the norm and established politicians fight to maintain the status quo. By establishing a new “limited”

institutional layer (the quota law), the political elite of Brazil was able to maintain the system almost intact, leading to very limited change on how political parties operate.

Figure 4.2 Institutional Dynamics and Party Behavior:  
Explaining Low Female Presence in Electoral Politics in Brazil



The male dominated Congress and the political discourse of the time allowed for the passing of a quota law that had weak enforceable capabilities. When combined with the patriarchal structure of Brazilian political parties, the result is a system that continues to be biased against women, in direct and indirect ways. The decentralized nature of state politics focuses power in the party executive leadership, normally comprised of the well-established local elites (overwhelmingly male). The party leadership's main goal is to maximize the votes of the few candidates who are generally established politicians, and consequentially male. Female candidates are therefore unable to run successful campaigns, creating a vicious cycle, as women fail to break into the party leadership because they are not established politicians, and they cannot become established/successful politicians because they receive little support.

Party strategies did not have to make significant changes after the implementation of the quota law and the loopholes provided to bypass the law combined with the well-established

“owner” culture left little room for women to increase their presence as viable candidates. Since the quota law did not address gender discrimination within parties, resources continued to flow towards well-established party elites and away from female candidates, both newcomers and established politicians.

#### **4.3 The 2009 Electoral Reform: Real Change or More of the Same?**

Between 1998 and 2006 the number of female candidates and women elected to State Assemblies in Brazil increased only slightly. In the 2006 elections, the country saw a lower number of women candidates and elected fewer women to state legislatures than in the previous elections. Scholars and activists blamed the language of the law as the main culprit for the low number of women elected. In 2008 a *Comissão Tripartite* (Three Parties Commission) comprised of members of the executive power,<sup>51</sup> parliament members,<sup>52</sup> and civil society<sup>53</sup> started meeting to discuss possible changes to the quota law. Under the guidance and lobbying from this Commission and with the support of the President (Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva), the Brazilian Congress passed, along with other proposals that comprised a “mini electoral reform,” a law that changed the language of the quota legislation. The aspects of the mini-political reform related to the gender quota law were passed mainly due to the support given to the cause by the current president (through the establishment of the Special Secretary for Women’s Policies in 2003 and vocal support for increased female politicians in power) and the lobbying of women-specific groups such as the Center for Feminist Studies and Advisory (CFEMEA) that gained considerable political strength throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (SPM, 2009).

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<sup>51</sup> Women’s Secretary, Chief of Staff, Institutional Relations Secretary, and Justice Ministry.

<sup>52</sup> Three Federal Deputies (Rita Camata, Luiza Erundina, and Vanessa Grazzotin) and two Senators (Serys Slhessareko and Renato Casagrande).

<sup>53</sup> Representatives from the National Council for Women’s Rights, CFEMEA, *Articulação das Mulheres Brasileiras* (Brazilian Women’s Lobby), National Forum on Women in Political Parties, and *Marcha Mundial das Mulheres* (World Walk for Women).

The 2009 changes showed the importance of executive support for legislative change. The Brazilian political system is characterized by a strong executive power that has a tendency to introduce (successfully) bills (Figueiredo & Limongi, 2000). While the 1995 and 1997 quota law debates happened with little interference from the executive, the 2009 change was a consequence of the explicit effort by the Presidency (through the establishment and support of the Three Parties Commission) to address women's representation. The strength of the Commission was also a consequence of the president's views on women's rights. Through the establishment of the Secretary for Women's Policies (SPM) in 2003, Lula paved the way for a government that made women's issues a priority, providing the lipstick caucus and civil society with unprecedented influence and resources over gender-related issues (Bohn, 2010). Moreover, Lula's 2006 re-election campaign pointed to the president's intention to make the quota law "stronger" (PT, 2006).

According to Law no. 12.034 of 2009, parties and coalitions are required to fill 30 percent of their candidacies with women, taking away the flexibility of the law (SPM, 2009).<sup>54</sup> The electoral reform also forced parties to allocate 5 percent of their funds for programs geared towards women in politics, and 10 percent of their radio and TV time for women's participation. Now, according to the law, parties could not field all male tickets and they should fill thirty percent of their total candidacies with women.

By changing the language of the law and attempting to make it more enforceable, scholars and activists hoped to see an increase both in the number of candidacies and in the number of elected women. The number of women candidates did increase considerably, rising from 13.6 percent of candidates in 2006 to 20.1 percent in 2010. While a 7 percent increase in

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<sup>54</sup> The law states that "each party or coalition must **fill** a minimum of 30% (thirty percent) and a maximum of 70% (seventy percent) for candidacies of each sex" (Alves, 2010).



the number of women candidates is an impressive leap from the previous election, no state reached the 30 percent mark, and in some states the percentage of female candidates diminished between 2006 and 2010. While the 2009 reform changed the language of the law to avoid the flexibility and ambiguity of the past, it did not completely solve the issue of enforcement of the quota legislation. If parties do not meet the quota threshold they are required to increase party funds directed to the professionalization of women politicians for the next election cycle (SPM, 2009). However, it is the job of the state's *Tribunal Regional Eleitoral* (Regional Electoral Tribunal or TRE) to enforce the law. In 2010 the interpretation of the law varied across TREs: in some states the court understood that under the law parties and coalitions should do everything possible to correct the inequalities present in their party tickets, while in other states the TRE viewed party tickets as a responsibility of the parties, and the correction of inequalities as the task of the party and not the action of the electoral courts (Global, 2010).

Table 4.5. The Quota Law Revised

Party	Total Candidates	Women Candidates	1996 Legal?	2009 Legal?	2009 Solution
A	30	10 (33%)	YES	YES	Threshold met
B	18	3 (16%)	YES	NO	Add three women or subtract eight men
C	20	0 (0%)	YES	NO	Add six women
D	30	8 (26%)	NO	NO	Subtract four men

The interpretation of the law and the uncertainty among parties, coalitions, and TREs on what to do about the quota law led to interesting “solutions” to the quota question. In some instances parties decided to take away candidacies from men and give them to women, as it was the case with PDT in the state of Pará (Pará, 2010). However, many party leaders and candidates complained that the law takes away the power parties have to fill the highest number of qualified candidates, arguing that they did not have well qualified women in their parties to fill the quota.

One male candidate interviewed before the 2010 elections complained that a lot of qualified male pre-candidates were not included in the final candidate list because of the quota law:

I am against the quota system. Quotas assume a historic failure and the correction of these failures through a quota system assumes another failure, the political failure. Some *companheiros* with good ideas and good messages were not allowed to run because we did not have the needed number of women candidates. It is regretful because these leaders and individuals have valuable ideas, even if they do not win the election. We lose the opportunity to have a new and open social discussion. With quotas we prevent some of these ideas from being presented. The quota regime is a system that excludes much more than it includes, because this system excludes ideas and limits the competition, which is the most important part of the electoral process. Competition allows for new ideas to flourish, even if they are not the winning ideas, and the quota system diminishes this process (Interview conducted 08/09/2010).

The leadership of some parties also disagreed with the quota system, especially with the new mandate to field 30 percent of women candidates. For Tadeu Filipelli, PMDB's leader in the Federal District, the law is forcing parties to put women on their tickets who do not have the intention to run and may not have the resources to run a successful campaign (Torres & Abreu, 2010). Called "*candidatas laranjas*," or orange candidates, women who are official candidates but do not actively campaign, were a common occurrence in 2010.<sup>55</sup> It was the case of Núbia Lima in the Federal District, where the candidate was convinced by colleagues to run even though she did not have any intention to run until the last days of candidate registration. Other women admitted that while their names were on the ballot they did not campaign at all, raising

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<sup>55</sup> The term *candidato laranja* is a popular term used to describe any candidate who is not actively campaigning, not just female candidates. The term was created most likely in connection with the use of the word *laranja* to identify the false/puppet name behind fraudulent activities. *Laranjas* would own a fake/ghost/fraudulent company while the profits of the illicit operation would go to someone else, who was likely a well-established crime leader. In the political sense, *candidato laranja* is any candidate puts their name on the ballot but has no intention to actively campaign. This is a common occurrence because public servants are awarded paid vacation if they decide to run for political office, so some "candidates" put their names on the ballot but actively campaign for another candidate. After the establishment of the quota law, many pundits believe that most women running are actually *laranjas*.

the question of whether the quota laws are serving the purpose of increasing the presence of women in politics (Abreu & Torres, 2010).

Given the surge in women candidacies in 2010, even with the report of orange candidates among these women, activists and scholars hoped for an increase in the number of women elected. In the specific case of State Assembly elections, Alves (2010) projected that at least 15 percent of women would win a seat in 2010, which would represent a jump of over four percent. However, the rise in women elected was much smaller than what the author projected and what activists expected, with female representation in state legislatures increasing less than one percent.

The 2009 mini-electoral reform attempted to address some of the problems (loopholes) of the 1995 gender quota law. By changing the language of the law and including a gender-specific funding component, the expectation was that parties would not only field more female candidates but also support them through the electoral process. In 2010, the first election after the law changed, parties fielded more female candidates but failed to elect a significantly higher number of female legislators. While the reform closed some of the loopholes that limited the candidacies of women it did not provide a strong enough enforcement mechanism to significantly change the way political parties prioritize candidates in state legislative elections. The law allowed for more female candidates to enter the race for a seat, but it did not address important aspects of the political system that puts women at a competitive disadvantage, such as access to campaign funds and the role of political parties in picking their own “winner” candidates to support.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The quota law, from its inception in 1995 to its change in 2009, has had a limited impact on increasing women’s descriptive representation in Brazilian legislatures. Institutional factors, such as the language of the law and the willingness of parties and the government to enforce the

law, are important reasons why women have not succeeded in legislative elections in the country despite the presence of affirmative action policies. Party behavior has changed a little as parties are actively searching for more female candidates, even if only to fill the quota law. In reality, the ambiguity of the quota law is likely a consequence of the belief held by most party leaders that the quota law is not necessary and that the status quo should not be changed in a drastic way. In other words, while the quota law has not helped increase the number of female legislators, it has worked the exact way party leaders and Congress members hoped it would. Individual and party strategies still put most female candidates at a disadvantage, as they are (most times) not experienced politicians having to learn the skills needed to win as they campaign and they do not receive the support needed from parties to win an election. The mini-political 2009 reform did have a significant impact in increasing the number of female candidates and has the potential, in the long run, to positively impact the fate of female candidates in Brazilian state legislatures. As 2010 was the first election under the new rules, it was expected that ambiguities would lead to different strategies within parties. Proponents of increased female representation hope that as parties (and electoral tribunals) start to learn how the new law “works,” female candidacies will increase in number and support from female candidates will also increase, leading to more elected women.

## **Chapter 5. Political Capital, Gendered Institutions, and the Differences between Winning and Losing Candidates**

The election of Dilma Rouseff as the first woman president of Brazil brought the debate about gender equality in politics back to the spotlight. Her election was, undoubtedly, an important moment for feminist and gender equality proponents in Brazil. However, the election of a female president does not make up for the fact that women are still severely under-represented in electoral politics in the country. As the previous chapters outlined, women have been marginalized from politics since the establishment of Brazil's modern political system, suffering through the suppression of women's movements during the dictatorship periods and the *machismo* legacy from the Vargas era (and beyond). Even the establishment of a quota law in Brazil was not enough to significantly improve women's chances of winning an elected seat, a consequence of party leaders who have not been willing to provide women as a group with the necessary tools to overcome years of marginalization. Nevertheless, in the past twenty years Brazilians have seen an unprecedented, yet modest, rise in the number of female politicians.

Female representation in state legislatures rose 5.8 percent since the implementation of the quota law in 1996, with the numbers raising slowly every election. It is arguable that the quota law was partially responsible for this rise in female state legislators. However, as Chapter 4 explains, the quota law has yet to create the effects hoped by gender equality proponents. Because Brazil elects legislators in an open-list PR system, the gender quota helped increase the number of female candidates but did little to address the disadvantage most women face when competing in an election. If the quota law has done little to increase the chances of female candidates winning an election, then which factors influence their election? This chapter explores formal and informal institutions in Brazilian politics to explain what makes a successful candidate. To elaborate my argument, I combine individual (candidate) level statistical data from

the 2010 State Assembly elections with candidate interviews conducted in 2008 and 2010 in two Brazilian states—Goiás and the Federal District. Testing the role of gender in the election of state legislators, I argue that the combination of formal institutions—electoral rules that benefit the professional politician and other sectors of the Brazilian elite—and informal institutions—gendered norms that dictate who is a viable candidate—make the Brazilian electoral system unwelcoming to female candidates. Thus, the interaction of gender with other factors creates additional hurdles for women in a state legislative campaign that are not faced by male candidates.

The analysis in this chapter indicates that being a woman is a disadvantage for obtaining campaign resources. In addition, certain professions benefit from the Brazilian political system more than others. Thus, the Brazilian electoral system is biased against female candidates in subtle ways, since the professions with the best access to campaign funds are dominated by men. Therefore, in Brazil's hyper-competitive electoral system, formal institutions (electoral rules and formal party structures) and informal norms (political capital and access to campaign resources) benefit male candidates more than they benefit female candidates, reinforcing the gender bias present in the Brazilian political system throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section 5.1 discusses recruitment and election structures, outlining the barriers female aspirants may face before choosing to run for office. Section 5.2 outlines the Brazilian electoral system, the formal and informal institutions surrounding it, and their connection with the Feminist Institutional literature. Section 5.3 focuses on the 2010 elections and the factors influencing the election of a state legislative candidate. This section explores three overarching aspects—individual traits, party characteristics, and electoral/institutional features—to analyze the role of gender in state

legislative elections in Brazil. Section 5.4 focuses on the particular importance of campaign finance and how it connects gender to Brazil's political institutions. This section shows how political capital is transformed into campaign funds and how this process differs between male and female candidates. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the importance of political capital, its connection to other aspects of the political system, and the role of formal and informal boys clubs in the perpetuation of women's under-representation in Brazil's state legislatures.

### **5.1 Recruitment and Election Structures: Ambition, Parties, and Becoming a Candidate**

The election process starts long before the day voters cast their ballots. Matland and King (2002, p. 1) explain that, “for women to get elected to parliament they need to pass three crucial barriers: first, they need to select themselves to stand for elections; second, they need to get selected as a candidate by the party; and third, they need to get selected by the voters.” In the Brazilian context, Matos (2011) proposes three levels (or barriers) for women's representation: the micro level (political ambition), the sociological level (eligibility issues and barriers posed by the electoral structure) and the politico-philosophical level (the “political game” or the visible and invisible institutions).<sup>56</sup> The author states that while these are three distinct processes that tend to follow a linear progression, the reality of Brazilian politics leads women to sometimes face these barriers in a simultaneous and unexpected manner. In this sub-section I explore the pre-election stage of the election process—the micro level, paying special attention to the role of individual political ambition and party procedures (gate keeping) on women's descriptive representation in legislatures.<sup>57</sup>

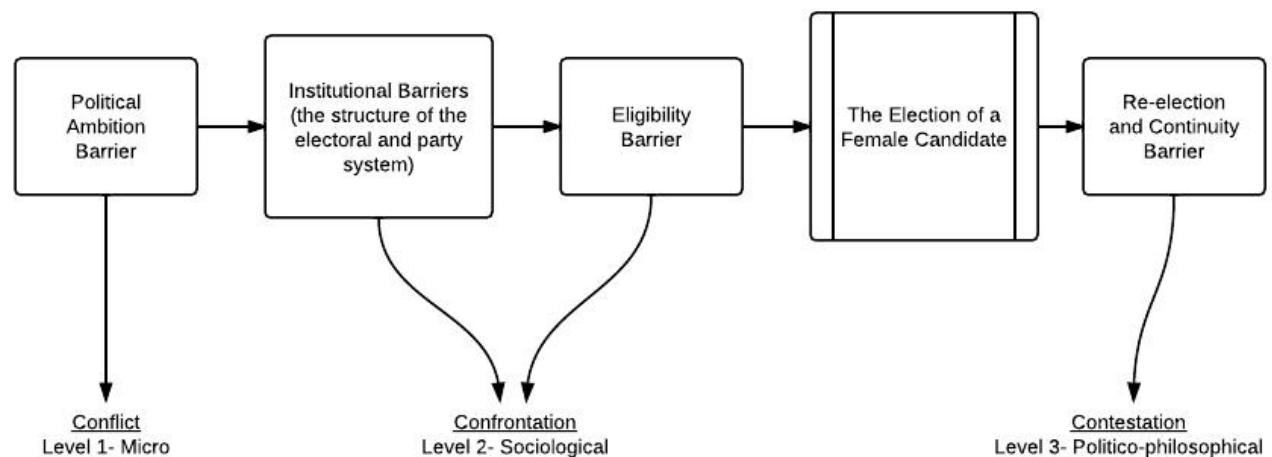
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<sup>56</sup> See Figure 5.1

<sup>57</sup> The focus of this chapter is what Matos calls Level 2 (sociological). This sub-section briefly describes the first level (micro) to situate the following discussion on the election of female candidates. This dissertation does not discuss Level 3 (politico-philosophical).

For women, the election process may end before it starts. Eligibility varies across countries, but in the majority of democracies in the world today most citizens are allowed to compete for a political office, with very few restrictions.<sup>58</sup> Because, in Brazil, party affiliation is a requirement, the decision to run for office must be made long before the actual election, which requires ambition, political connections, and resources for aspiring candidates. Even before making the decision to run for office, women must be interested in the political process, be affiliated to a political party, and then petition to be a candidate. Therefore, while widely inclusive in theory, the Brazilian political system gives parties sole gatekeeping power in deciding who runs. Before being ‘chosen’ by a political party, women must be willing to enter the political system. Feminists draw attention to how power relations in society follow preset gender roles. Krook and Childs (2010) point out that social relations within the private sphere of home and family are important to understanding political power.

Figure 5.1. The Three Levels of Women’s Representation<sup>59</sup>



<sup>58</sup> In the case of Brazil, any citizen who is registered to vote, of a minimum age (for State Assembly positions the minimum age is 21), does not have documentation problems with any government institution, and is a member of a political party for at least one year prior to the election, is an eligible candidate (TSE, 2012).

<sup>59</sup> Adapted from Matos (2011), based on discussions from Norris and Lovenduski (1989) and Matland (1998).



In the United States, Fox and Lawless (2011) conclude that traditional gender role socialization has created a system where women are less likely to enter politics, and men and women with similar professional qualifications see the political process differently. The authors posit that “women’s lower self-assessments of their political skills are consistent with a political culture that has not embraced women in the public sphere” (Fox & Lawless, 2011, p. 70). A similar phenomenon is most likely present in the Brazilian system. In a 2010 public opinion poll in Brazil, 72 percent of the male respondents claimed they have no interest in running for any political position, while 81 percent of women respondents also had no interest (SPM, 2010). This poll suggests that women are less likely to run for political office than men, even though both male and female respondents largely agree that more women in politics would benefit the country. Even women who have entered the political process see these gendered norms as problematic. Luzia de Paula, a candidate in the 2010 State Assembly election in the Federal District illustrates how the ‘personal is political’ in Brazil:

It is hard for women to do politics. Even as we evolve as a country and try to foster equality, it is difficult because our society is still *machista*. The women give birth and educate. They educate men to have a prominent role in society, while teaching women how to take care of the family, and take care of men. So, what happens to women? They enter politics, but they still take care of the children, family, and social life. For men it is simpler, they only have the obligation to take care of politics, while the woman has to take care of it all. As this happens, women start to think that it is easier for men to do politics (Interview by author conducted 07/27/2010).

Though no comprehensive study on the issue exists in Brazil, scholars have started to develop hypotheses about women’s political ambition in the country. Based on interviews with female politicians in the state of Minas Gerais, Matos (2011) concludes that a number of factors prevent women from trying their luck in the elective process: the lack of autonomy influenced by gendered understandings of the division of labor, lack of confidence and self-esteem, and lack of economic independence and economic resources.

Gender roles assignments that define women as the main “workers” in the private/family life are still prevalent in most societies, including Brazil. The need to work a full time job and still coordinate and perform most household chores places women at a clear disadvantage when they try to pursue endeavors outside family and work life. Therefore, balancing work, family, and politics is still a deterrent for most women considering a career in politics. Matos (2011) see women’s lack of political ambition as the first major deterrent for increased women’s representation in Brazil, and political leaders agree. When asked if the lack of women in politics is the result of party policies, Luzia de Paula argues that

It is a result of the political culture. It is not just the party; it is the culture that says women should not occupy this space. So women are not involved, and it is not their fault or the party’s fault (interview conducted 07/27/2010).

Virmondes Cruvinel, a local political leader in Goiás state for the newly established PSD, believes that the more serious parties are actively trying to recruit more women, but they are faced with challenges in finding good candidates. In the case of his party, Mr. Cruvinel believes the executive committee is searching for women to join the party and eventually become candidates, but he feels there is still a communication issue: where party leaders do not know how to invite women. Mr. Cruvinel believes this is a reality not only in Goiás state but all over the country, and he further argues that:

It is hard to increase women’s political participation in the party because they end up opting to pursue their political goals through different avenues and do not enter formal politics. They participate in social work through NGOs, as they are actively present in labor unions. Two of the strongest unions in the state are led by women. This leads to scarce party participation and a lot of good women end up working for specific interest groups (interview by author conducted 01/15/2012).

Mr. Cruvinel’s argument that there is a “communications” issue and Mrs. de Paula statement that women’s limited presence in politics is a “result of the political culture” suggest that bias goes

beyond the Brazilian political structure and permeates the fabric of society, preventing even qualified women from pursuing a space in electoral politics.

Gender roles not only dissuade women from wanting to run for elected office, but they may also prevent them from being selected as candidates by parties, even if they aspire to become politicians. If a woman decides to run for political office in Brazil, she must request support from key party officials and hope that the executive board accepts her nomination. Ambition is only the first step for a woman to enter politics: political connections and resources (two characteristics that are closely related) are as important, if not more important, than ambition in the quest for an elected seat.

After the decision is made to become a candidate, aspirants depend on the choice made by party officials. In most countries, the recruitment and selection of politicians happens within political parties (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Lovenduski & Norris, 1993). In Brazil, this process is also controlled by party officials, many times behind closed doors.<sup>60</sup> This gatekeeping is problematic for women across the world and it is no different in Brazil. In the candidate selection process, gender and historical legacies both factor in the nomination of female candidates. Because support within the political party is essential, and this support may only come if party officials believe a pre-candidate has the potential to obtain resources (campaign finance), the political recruiting model, in the case of Brazil, must emphasize the connection between ambition and resources.

Gendered norms are a strong deterrent factor for women who may be willing to enter the political process. However, even though these obstacles are constantly present in the political system and society, some women still try to win an elected seat. When they decide to run, not all of them will be successful in their election bid.

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<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 4.

## **5.2 Formal and Informal Institutions in Brazil: Unintentional Gender Bias or Systematic Exclusion?**

Female candidates are vying for elected positions more than ever in Brazil, and yet the number of elected women has risen only slightly in the past two decades. Are women being systematically excluded from the political process or is this a consequence of other factors present in the Brazilian political system? I argue that the Brazilian electoral system is biased against women in subtle ways, and it is the dynamic between the historical legacy of formal institutions—mainly in the form of electoral laws and party structures—and informal norms, especially concerning perceptions of political capital, that makes the system unwelcoming to women candidates. Formal and informal institutions create a feedback loop that reinforces previously established political connections and loyalties, contributing directly to the marginalization of female politicians.

The relationship between formal and informal institutions is at the heart of the analysis in this chapter. Feminist Institutionalism (FI) proponents see gender as an important aspect of the study of institutions. According to Mackay (2011), FI sees formal and informal institutions as gendered and interactive, and it is the relationship between institutional configurations and established informal norms that influence the effects of gender neutrality or gender bias on political outcomes. In the Brazilian context, Matos (2011, p. 83) argues that women as a group face similar hurdles when competing for a legislative position, and that these hurdles are a consequence of Brazil's political bias toward female politicians. According to the author women struggle in their bid for elected positions because of a combination of rules constructed for, by, and on the "political game." In other words, the election of female politicians (including state

legislators) is directly connected to the formal and informal institutions present in Brazil's political system.

Political institutions are the norms and rules established with the intent to create a stable and predictable environment in which different interests are discussed and decisions made. In order for political institutions to flourish, actors must accept these rules as legitimate. But political institutions are not only the laws written in a book. Knight (1992, p. 1) asserts that these informal conventions "form the base on which a vast range of formal institutions organize and influence economic and political life." I focus on the Brazilian electoral rules and norms to argue that perceptions as to who makes a good candidate result from both electoral incentives and shared understandings among political elites, both of which work against female candidates.

#### Formal Institutions: Electoral Rules

Brazil's open-list proportional representation (PR) system creates an electoral environment that is detrimental for female legislative candidates. While the literature suggests the benefit of proportional representation and high district magnitude to women's descriptive representation (Darcy, Welch, & Clark, 1994; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Matland, 1993), these characteristics have not helped women in the Brazilian political system. The key reason for the disconnect between the literature and the Brazilian case is the nature of the country's PR system. Brazil's open-list PR system is significantly different from the majority of PR systems studied in the literature, in the sense that it is a PR system that favors preference vote, as opposed to a party oriented vote common in mixed and closed-lists PR systems.

Recent research indicates that open-list PR and candidate-centered systems like Brazil's are detrimental to the election of women. Schmidt (2009) argues that PR systems with clear placement mandates for women (gender quotas) are the most effective in increasing women's

descriptive representation. Because placement mandates require some type of mixed or closed party list, placement mandates are impossible in preference vote open-list PR systems like Brazil.<sup>61</sup> Thames and Williams (2010, p. 1593) posit that “party centered systems that feature weak incentives for personal votes encourage women’s representation in comparison to candidate-centered systems that feature strong incentives for personal votes.” Case studies featuring other Latin American countries also show open-list PR as detrimental to women’s representation. In a study of Argentinean provincial elections, Jones (1998) argues that in PR systems any deviation from a closed list electoral model leads to diminishing numbers of elected women. Jones and Navia (1999) corroborate the argument above by using the Chilean municipal elections as an example, further stating that most countries that use an open-list PR system see limited success in increasing women’s representation. The authors suggest that gender quotas in open-list PR systems suffer from a diminishing returns problem, where “the rate of return on each percentage increase in women candidates is likely to progressively decrease as the percentage of women candidates rise” (Jones & Navia, 1999, p. 353).

Brazil’s open-list PR system has led to the development of a candidate centered environment where parties nominate a large number of candidates and consequentially have limited control over which candidates are elected (Ames, 1995, 2001; Nicolau, 2006b; Samuels, 1999). In this system the quota law provided little leverage to female aspiring politicians, especially because state party leaders largely control the nomination process and allocation of party resources, creating a system that benefits only a few candidates, leaving many others with little or no party support (see Chapter 4). A young candidate running for a seat in the Federal

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<sup>61</sup> Open-list PR systems may have pre-set party lists to help voters decide on who to vote. This is the case in Poland, where women have increased their presence in the past decade (see Kunovich, 2012). In the case of Brazil, parties do not provide voters with a pre-set list of rank-ordered candidates, increasing the incumbency advantage and leading to costly campaigns.

District voiced his frustration with the party leadership. When asked if the party provided him with the appropriate support for the election the candidate declared:

There was no support whatsoever. What happened was a centralization of all resources and support to the campaign of the Regional President of the party, who was also running for a State Assembly seat. No other candidate was “prioritized,” only him and another candidate, which hurt everyone’s campaigns (Interview by author conducted 01/08/2011).

This was not the only candidate who voiced some concern about the lack of support from the party. Eight out of twenty candidates interviewed believed their party helped some more than others. Most of the candidates who voiced these concerns were newcomers or were not established political figures. If state parties allocate resources according to what the leadership wants, their support will most likely benefit seasoned politicians or the “owners” of the party, leading to both interparty and intraparty competition during an election.<sup>62</sup> Thus, state party politics in Brazil creates a system that is biased against women: it is not overtly biased against women, but the covert support of well-established (mostly male) politicians makes it hard for women to win legislative elections. This institutionalized gender bias is central to the Feminist Institutional approach. Brazil’s (formal) electoral institutions are dominated by men because that is the way the system worked ever since its establishment 60 years ago and those institutions were influenced by the overwhelming presence of men in positions of power throughout Brazil’s political history.

The simultaneous election of other elected positions allows for state legislative candidates to use other candidates as allies in their own election bid. Ames (1995) mentions the *dobradinha*, or double ups, where federal legislative candidates pay for the literature of a state assembly candidate, who in return ask his supporters to vote for their benefactor. This type of strategy is also practiced by state assembly candidates in conjunction with senatorial and

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<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 4.

gubernatorial candidates, creating a support network across the state and establishing relationships with other elected officials and candidates, such as mayors, governors, Chamber of Deputy and Senate candidates, and presidential candidates (Nicolau, 2006a, 2006b).

Because competition for a state legislative seat is fierce in most states, with the number of candidates per seat in 2010 ranging from 5.54 in Sergipe state to 34.54 in the Federal District (over 800 candidates), it is important for candidates to associate their names with the names of well-known politicians, such as senatorial and gubernatorial candidates. This is especially important for candidates with limited name recognition, since the connection voters make between a majoritarian candidate and the state legislature candidate can decide who they will cast a vote for. One example of this type of strategy can be seen in Jacira da Silva's campaign. Ms. da Silva, a PT state legislative candidate in the Federal District in 2010, was running a campaign with limited financial resources. The candidate mentioned that her main goal in the beginning of the campaign was to secure "partnerships" with well-established federal legislative and senatorial candidates. She argued that the exposure she would get and the material (pamphlets, flyers, cards) she would acquire from these partners, could make a big difference in the success of her campaign (Interview conducted 08/10/2010).

The connection between state legislative candidates and other politicians during each election is another aspect of the Brazilian political system that affects female candidates negatively. The proximity to the governor, the gubernatorial candidate, and well known senatorial and national legislature candidates is crucial to the success of an election bid. The same is true at the local level (City Council) and the national level (Chamber of Deputies). Because these elections feature a large number of candidates and can be decided by very small margin of votes, any factor that can give a candidate an edge is important. Campaign materials



and campaign rallies featuring well-known politicians can, sometimes, make or break a campaign. When it comes to being associated with specific “political celebrities,” being a woman can make this job more difficult. Because most women are still newcomers, obtaining endorsements and even knowing who to ask for help in the party can be difficult.

Moreover, a decentralized party structure, which is a reality for most parties in Brazil, can also pose problems for newcomers of both genders, but especially for women candidates. Araújo (2003, p. 15) states that “most parties, with the exception of a few left wing ones, do not have an internal organization that functions as a structured and permanent channel for the participation of their militants and affiliates.”<sup>63</sup> As a consequence of this lack of structure, the access to party resources becomes limited to the party's ruling authorities, who are most likely men. Oraidia Maria, a PT City Council candidate for the city of Goiânia (Goiás state) in the 1996 election provides a clear description of the importance of knowing the right people during the campaign:

The mayoral candidate had his preferred candidates, which were obviously a consequence of the party's leanings. Even the participation of the mayoral candidate in gatherings sponsored by city council candidates was defined by this logic. When I realized that there were candidates in the coalition that had clear privileges, I started to pay more attention to the process and started making my own connections with the party officials. This was towards the end of the campaign, when I met a person involved with the party's communications section, who was an advisor to the mayoral candidate and was related to a friend of mine. It was then that things changed a little, at least in regards to campaign materials, because I was able to get a lot of things through this person. The financial coordinator of my campaign was impressed and wanting to know where I got all those things, but the deal I had with the communications officer was that I could not reveal who was providing me these materials. No one knew how I was getting these campaign materials (interview by author conducted 05/07/2009).

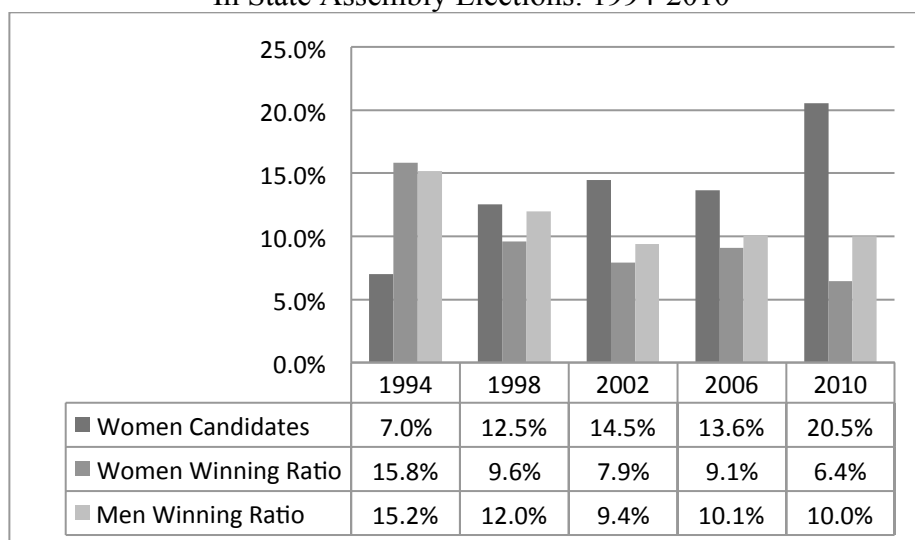
While this is an account of the 1996 City Council election, seven of the twenty candidates interviewed for the 2010 elections as well as PT's National Women's Secretary agree that this

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<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 4

type of privileged campaigning stills happens today in all legislative elections.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the nature of campaigning for city council positions can be extrapolated to the state level as well, where gubernatorial candidates within each party or coalition have their preferred candidates, and the parties/coalitions provide these individuals with more support. Historically, these preferred candidates have been men, with the exception of a few women who either gained enough power in other ways or were members of influential political families that have the resources to elect them regardless of the party structure.<sup>65</sup>

Figure 5.2. Female Candidates and Winning Ratio  
In State Assembly Elections: 1994-2010



However, the nature of electoral rules cannot fully explain why after the implementation of the quota law women as a group have experienced less success in state legislative races. As Figure 5.2 shows, as the number of female candidates increased their success ratio decreased

<sup>64</sup> The candidates brought up the issue of campaign privileges on their own, without being prompted by a question directly asking if parties tended to provide more resources to some candidates and not others.

<sup>65</sup> Laisy Moriere, PT's National Women's Secretary argues that the vast majority of successful female politicians are directly connected to political families. She uses the example of the state of Goiás, where, according to her, all female state legislators and Federal Deputies are from well-established political families. It is impossible to determine the true impact of political connections in an election with over 12,000 candidates. However, most authors agree that for both men and women, connection to a powerful political family is a very important aspect for a successful election bid (Álvares, 2011; Alves, 2010; Alves & Cavenaghi, 2009; C. Araújo & J. E. D. Alves, 2007; Matos, 2011; Pinheiro, 2007).

sharply. I argue that in order to understand the gendered nature of Brazilian political institutions we must also take in consideration the informal aspects of candidate selection and campaigning that influence success.

#### Informal Institutions: Political Capital and the Ideal Candidates

Political capital is part of the “institutional game,” and the resources obtained (and maintained) by a candidate/politician based on their influence in the political sphere are central to understanding why women are under-represented in the Brazilian political system (Pineiro, 2007). Bourdieu (1998) defines political capital as the social recognition that allows certain individuals to be accepted as political actors (see also L. F. Miguel, 2003; Pineiro, 2007). Political capital is directly related to a polity’s institutional design, but it is also a form of symbolic power that is a consequence of norms and identities present in that society. Miguel (2003) sees political capital as a combination of cultural capital (cognitive training for political activity), social capital (established relationship networks), and economic capital (resources needed or political activity). I argue that, in the Brazilian case, political capital works against most female candidates because the professional activities that tend to yield the highest levels of political capital (the combination of cultural, social, and economic capital) are largely dominated by men. The prevalence of men in professions offering higher levels of political capital create a vicious cycle where women do not have the resources needed to pursue a successful career in politics, which consequently leads society (and party elites) to see men as more suitable options for an elected seat.

Bourdieu (1998) divides political capital into three separate categories: delegated capital, converted capital and heroic capital. Adapting to the Brazilian experience, Miguel (2003) argues that delegated and converted capital are the two types that are better suited to explain the idea of

political capital in the country. Delegated capital is the result of limited and provisional (albeit renewable) capital controlled by an institution, in this case political parties. This type of capital is used by individuals on behalf of the party, and it is strengthened as the individual is able to provide the party with influence in the political system. In other words, elected officials and appointed politicians (officials nominated by the government and parties, such as ministers and secretaries) use the political capital given to them by parties to further their own political goals, while parties “lend” them this capital as a tool to further their political objectives.

Converted capital is the type of political capital that comes from the conversion of popularity and recognition obtained in areas other than the political system. In this case, individuals with some type of celebrity status in society can use that and convert it into political capital (Bourdieu, 1998; L. F. Miguel, 2003; Pinheiro, 2007). In Brazil, the most common professionals able to win elections thanks to their converted capital are radio personalities, actors, musicians and professional athletes. One of the most notorious examples of the power of converted capital in Brazil happened in the 2010 Chamber of Deputies election, when a clown named Tiririca earned 1.3 million votes to be the highest voting Chamber candidate (BBC, 2010). Adapting Bourdieu’s typology to the Brazilian experience, Miguel (2003) also adds professionals who can transfer their economic capital into the country’s costly political campaigns as individuals with converted capital. Therefore, being involved with a specific industry may provide a candidate with enough converted capital to win a seat. Perissinotto and Miriade (2009) found that candidates who were entrepreneurs, engineers, doctors, economists, and farmers (*agropecuários*) were more likely to win a Chamber seat than other candidates in the 2006 elections.

In sum, political capital is essential for candidates to succeed in Brazil. This capital is material (through campaign finance) but it is also normative in the sense that politicians, parties, and citizens have their own understandings of what makes a good politician. The ability to convert other kinds of (material and immaterial) capital into political capital is essential for candidates to run a successful campaign. I argue that this conversion ability is gendered in Brazil, where professions yielding the best convertibility are overwhelmingly male, reinforcing gendered stereotypes that men are more interested in politics and are better prepared to be politicians.

### **5.3 The 2010 Elections and What it Takes to be a *Vencedora***

The previous section established the argument that most women face challenges to win a legislative seat in Brazil because of the dynamic between electoral institutions and access to resources, or political capital. In order to test this assertion I use a logistic regression model to predict which factors influence the election of a candidate, using gender as an interactive variable to determine its role in the success (or failure) of an election. The main goal of this analysis is to understand how specific factors influence male and female candidates differently, and what impact this difference has on the chances of winning an elected seat. To test this relationship I consider three types of variables: personal characteristics, party characteristics, and institutional aspects.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Data for all variables were collected from *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral's* (TSE) database from the 2010 elections. TSE collects personal information data on all candidates and requires each candidate to report their campaign finances (money raised and money spent). 9021 of the roughly 12000 candidates for State Assembly provided a full campaign finance report. The regression shown on Table 5.1 uses the individual information from these 9021 candidates who provided a full report of campaign funds. It is likely that the 3000 other candidates who did not provide financial reports at the end of the election are *candidatos laranjas*, since the failure to report on campaign finance bars an individual from holding any political office (elected or appointed). The court also collects party-related information, used in the institutional and party variables.

*Individual traits* such as education level, marital status, political experience, and profession can have an impact on the chances a candidate has to win an election. However, such traits may influence election chances differently depending on a candidate's gender. The variables below are used to determine which individual traits are important when running for a State Assembly seat in Brazil:<sup>67</sup>

- **Gender:** A dichotomous variable (woman=1). Used in the first model to determine if gender by itself is an influential trait. Also used as an interacting variable.
- **Marital Status:** A dichotomous variable (married=1). In 2010, 59 percent of all candidates were married, while 74 percent of the elected candidates were married. In the model I test if marital status is influential in the election of candidates and if there is a gendered difference. I hypothesize that married candidates are more likely to win a seat as they can pool resources with their spouse (see Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009).
- **Profession:** To measure political capital, I include in the regression the most reported professions.<sup>68</sup> I use a dichotomous variable for each profession as reported by candidates on TSE's biographical data are coded. The most "popular" professions are incumbents and City Council members (delegated capital); entertainers (radio, TV, and film personalities), agro-entrepreneurs, educators (teachers and professors), public servants,

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<sup>67</sup> Chapters 3 and 4 established that family connections are important factors influencing the election of female politicians. Due to data limitations (it is unviable to determine family political connections of over 9000 candidates) it is not possible to determine in this model if family connections are a statistical significant variable influencing the election of candidates.

<sup>68</sup> TSE's data contains 74 different professions reported by candidates. I coded the most common professions (incumbents, City Council Members, entertainers, agro-entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, engineer, doctor, nurse, members of the military, educators, members of the police force, religious leaders, and public servants). I included in the regression the professions in used in previous scholar work on campaign and elections in Brazil (Araújo, 2010b; Mitchell, 2009; Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009; Pinheiro, 2007; Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008) and professions that seemed important to the study of gender and elections based on interviews and other research on women and elections (Matos, 2011).

entrepreneurs, and nurses (converted capital). I also test for the different impact professions can have on election chances according to gender. I hypothesize that some professions (entrepreneurs, agro-entrepreneurs, entertainers, and candidates with delegated capital) are more likely to win a seat than other professionals.

- **Education level:** The level of education of a candidate can be an important factor in the likelihood of a successful election (see Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009). I argue that the level of education of a candidate helps in two specific ways: First, well-educated candidates will have more skills that can be converted into running a successful campaign; and second, voters are more confident in candidates when they are better educated. This variable was code on a scale from 1 (illiterate) to 7 (college or any other higher-level degree),<sup>69</sup> and I hypothesize that education level has a positive impact on the chances a candidate has of being elected, and that there isn't a gendered difference in this impact.
- **Campaign finance:** Campaign finance has long been established as a key determinant for a useful election in Brazil (Ames, 1995; dos Santos, 2007; Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009; Samuels, 2001a, 2001d). I hypothesize that the more a candidate spends on the campaign, the more likely s/he is to be elected. I standardized the campaign finance variable by creating a ratio between the amount of money spent by a candidate and the number of voters in a state (money/voters).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> 1=Illiterate or no formal education; 2=Grade school education (incomplete); 3= Grade school (complete); 4= High school (incomplete); 5= High school (complete); 6= Some college; 7= College degree and graduate education.

<sup>70</sup> I used campaign expenditures instead of campaign funds received because this is a better indicator of how money influenced the election. Nevertheless, most candidates spend all campaign fund received, as it is required by law that all campaign funds must be spent during the campaign or returned to donors.

*Party characteristics* can also influence the election of a candidate. Party strategies in a state and other national characteristics of the party may affect male and female candidates differently.

- **Coalition Strength:** A ratio of the number of candidates in a coalition in comparison to the number of candidates in a state. Because coalitions can run a higher number of candidates, I argue that intra-coalition competition is detrimental to women candidates. Therefore, I hypothesize that the larger the coalition, the lower the chances of election for women.
- **Proximity to Incumbent Governor:** I argue that candidates are more likely to win a seat in the State Assembly if their coalition is aligned with the incumbent governor.

*Institutional factors*, defined here as characteristics of the electoral system, can also be influential in increasing the chances of a woman getting elected. Based on previous literature on women's representation as well as work on Brazilian elections, I chose the variables below to explain how institutional factors influence the election of women to Brazil's State Assemblies.

- **District Magnitude:** Some studies argue that higher district magnitude can lead to increased women's representation (Engstrom, 1987; Pippa Norris, 2004; Rule, 1987), while other studies suggest that there is no significant relationship between district magnitude and women's representation (Matland, 1993; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009; Studlar & Welch, 1991). For State Assembly election, district magnitude varies between 24 on the smaller states to 94 in the state of São Paulo. I hypothesize that higher district magnitude increases the chances of female candidates.
- **Electoral Competition:** Measured as the number of candidates per seat available in a state. The level of competition in the states varied greatly in the 2010 elections. Previous



research on women's representation argues that higher competition levels are detrimental to female candidates (Darcy et al., 1994; Matland, 1993; McAllister & Studlar, 2002; Studlar & Welch, 1991). I test if competition has a gendered effect on election chances.

## Results

Table 5.1 shows the results of the model computing all interactive terms between gender and the variables tested in this analysis. When accounting for gendered interactions, only individual characteristics are statistically significant. In other words, only individual characteristics have a gendered component, influencing the election chances of male and female candidates differently. This means that for the candidates running in the 2010 elections, some political institutions (party characteristics and electoral institutions) and state socioeconomic characteristics affect election chances, but the effect these variables have do not vary significantly between male and female candidates.

Before discussing the interactive variables, a few of the significant institutional and state variables are worth noting. First, candidates from coalitions associated with the (incumbent) governor were more likely to win the election. The connection between executive and legislative power is very important in Brazilian politics, and candidates who can increase the sphere of influence of the executive are likely to receive more support and more exposure during the campaign. Of course, the proximity to the governor only increases the chances a candidate has of winning an elected seat, and the candidates who have political capital will be the ones able to capitalize on this connection. Second, district magnitude increases the likelihood of candidate success while competition (candidates per seat) diminishes the chances of success. While these results are somewhat obvious, the goal of this analysis was to determine if these aspects of the electoral system would have a different effect for male and female candidates.

Table 5.1. Logistic Regression Model: Factors Influencing Candidate Success:  
State Assembly—Gendered Interactions<sup>71</sup>

DV: Elected=1	<b>Variables</b>			<b>Gender Interaction</b>	
Variables	B (SE)	P-value		B (SE)	P-value
<b>Individual Traits</b>			<b>Ind. Traits</b>		
Gender	-1.773 (1.155)	0.124			
Married	0.163 (0.099)	0.102	Gen*Married	0.583 (0.259)	0.024
Incumbent	2.564 (0.126)	0.000	Gen*Incumbent	0.351 (0.381)	0.355
City Council	0.592 (0.238)	0.013	Gen*City Council	0.797 (0.586)	0.173
Entertainer	0.789 (0.349)	0.023	Gen*Entertainer	1.796 (0.904)	0.046
Agro-entrepreneur	1.149 (0.251)	0.000	Gen*Agro	1.837 (1.281)	0.151
Entrepreneur	0.212 (0.161)	0.187	Gen*Entrepreneur	1.276 (0.455)	0.004
Doctor	0.276 (0.189)	0.144	Gen*Doctor	0.041 (0.827)	0.961
Nurse	-0.586 (1.059)	0.579	Gen*Nurse	2.891 (1.203)	0.016
Educator	-0.715 (0.261)	0.006	Gen*Educator	1.475 (0.046)	0.001
Public Servant	-0.388 (0.182)	0.033	Gen*Public S.	1.121 (0.506)	0.026
Education Level	0.377 (0.041)	0.000	Gen*Ed. Level	-0.082 (0.136)	0.542
Campaign Finance	0.014 (0.001)	0.000	Gen*Campaign F.	0.003 (0.001)	0.028
<b>Party Characteristics</b>			<b>Party Char.</b>		
Coalition Strength	0.671 (0.917)	0.464	Gen*Coalition S.	1.648 (2.575)	0.522
Governor's Coalition	0.641 (0.108)	0.000	Gen*Gov. Coal.	0.149 (0.306)	0.625
<b>Institutional Characteristics</b>			<b>Inst. Char.</b>		
District Magnitude	0.018 (0.002)	0.000	Gen*DM	0.004 (0.006)	0.527
Competition	-0.066 (0.011)	0.000	Gen*Competition	0.023 (0.027)	0.383
Constant	-5.583 (0.372)				
N= 9021					
AIC= 4255.5					

The results in Table 5.1 reiterate the importance of individual traits, and more importantly, the importance of political capital in the election of state legislator in Brazil. Individual characteristics, and not party or institutional characteristics, are the most important factors influencing the election of state legislators. Delegated capital (incumbents and City Council members) increases the election chances of candidates; two professions—entertainers and agro-entrepreneurs—positively affect election chances; two others—civil servants and

<sup>71</sup> Using R Statistical Package and Zelig (Imai, et al., 2008). Seven professions coded in the data were omitted from the regression shown above.

educators—negatively affect election chances. Converted capital is not uniform across professions, and certain candidates possess a competitive advantage because of their professional background.

Table 5.2. Gender, Predicted Probabilities and Professions<sup>72</sup>

Characteristic	All Candidates	Men	Women	Total Elected	Female/Male Candidate Ratio
Incumbents	0.397 [0.365, 0.462]	Interaction not significant	Interaction not significant	420	0.14
Vereador (City Council)	0.089 [0.063, 0.143]	Interaction not significant	Interaction not significant	62	0.14
Entertainer	0.15 [0.077, 0.212]	0.125 [0.064, 0.205]	0.25 [0.057, 0.589]	13	0.31
Agribusiness	0.188 [0.112, 0.287]	Interaction not significant	Interaction not significant	35	0.05
Education	0.038 [0.021, 0.047]	0.028 [0.018, 0.047]	0.045 [0.024, 0.085]	34	0.53
Public Service	0.038 [0.030, 0.055]	0.047 [0.027, 0.053]	0.051 [0.020, 0.095]	50	0.2
Entrepreneur	0.066 [0.055, 0.095]	0.072 [0.052, 0.091]	0.085 [0.049, 0.166]	80	0.13
Nurse	0.059 [0.008, 0.205]	0.049 [0.003, 0.222]	0.227 [0.077, 0.386]	6	1.56

Not only does profession affect election chances, but male and female candidates are affected differently within certain professions. Table 5.2 shows the predicted probabilities of election among professions that showed a statistically significant relationship. In order to

<sup>72</sup> I use predicted probabilities to interpret the results from the model shown on Table 5.1. The literature points out to two main approaches to interpreting interaction effects: by presenting marginal effects or predicted values (for a more detailed discussion see Boyd, Epstein, & Martin, 2010; Brambor, Clark, & Golder, 2006; Golder, 2006; Kam & Franzese, 2007). Predicted probabilities are estimated with all continuous independent variables held at their means and dichotomous variables set to their mode. Predicted probabilities calculated using R and the Zelig package (Imai, King, & Lau, 2008). Numbers displayed on table are the predicted probability of election within a 95 % confidence interval (numbers between brackets showing the confidence interval range).

account for the disparities in professions between genders; the table also provides the female to male ratio for candidates for each profession. The two professions accounting for delegated capital (incumbents and vereadores) are dominated by male candidates (0.14 female/male ratio) and both increase the chances of election considerably. Incumbency is by far the best predictor for election success, which puts women as a group at a clear disadvantage given that, in 2006, only 11.7 percent of all state legislators were women. *Vereadores* have an advantage over other candidates as well, albeit this advantage is not nearly as strong as incumbency, showing that connection to previous political experience and political connections can benefit candidates. Once again, given women's limited presence in City Councils across the country, they are at a disadvantage in the quest for an elected seat.

The profession yielding the best capital conversion is overwhelmingly male. Involvement with agribusiness is a strong predictor for a successful election (0.188 predicted probability), and yet few women are involved in agribusiness (0.05 male/female ratio). Women increase their election chances if they are entertainers, educators, public servants, entrepreneurs, or nurses. However, only one of these professions (entertainer) actually provides candidates with a competitive advantage, and two of these professions (educators and public servants) negatively affected a candidate's election chances. Women fielded a high proportion of candidates coming from education (0.56 ratio) and nursing (1.56) professions, and yet these two professions elected a total of 40 (out of 1035) candidates nationwide. Of the four professions that benefit candidates the most, women have a competitive advantage in only one of them. In Brazil, female candidates stemming from the entertainment industry seem able to capitalize on their status in society and successfully convert it into political capital. However, a limited number of entertainers run (and win) state elections, and in 2010 only 13 (out of 1035) state legislators elected were entertainers,

including two women. In the other three beneficial professions (420 incumbents, 62 City Council members, and 35 agro-entrepreneurs), women are severely under-represented, leading to a very limited number of elected women coming from those professions.

A closer analysis of elected state legislators in Goiás state and the Federal District shows the importance of political influence in obtaining an elected seat. Taking advantage of the information available on the website for the *Projeto Excelências* (Excellence Project) developed by Transparency Brazil, it is possible to show how important political connections are to winning an elected seat. All female legislators in both states had some previous connection with the political system, where two were incumbents, five held other political positions (elected or appointed),<sup>73</sup> and three possessed family connections<sup>74</sup> ("Projeto Excelências," 2012). In comparison, 87 percent of all male state legislators had some type of political connection, where 40 percent of them were incumbents, 40 percent held previous elected or appointed political positions, and six (or ten percent of all male legislators) possessed some kind of family connection to state politics.<sup>75</sup>

The strong presence of individuals with political ties (77 percent of all elected State Legislators in these two states have previous political experience) reinforces the idea that women are at a disadvantage when running for an elected seat in Brazil. The women succeeding in their bid of an elected seat are doing so thanks to their political connections, but since women have been historically excluded from formal politics in Brazil, few women have been able to build enough influence within the party structure to obtain the political capital needed to win an elected seat. In other words, the historical under-representation of women in formal politics

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<sup>73</sup> One former Mayor, one former State Secretary, one former Vice-Governor, one former State Legislator, and one alternate (State Assembly) who took office during last section.

<sup>74</sup> Two wives and one daughter of well-known political figures in their respective state.

<sup>75</sup> All in Goiás state, four are sons of well-known politicians, while two are related (cousins) to individuals with close ties to political families.

creates a self-enforcing barrier to women, keeping the few who have risen through the party ranks in a comfortable position (in comparison to other women) but keeping the overwhelming majority of female candidates out of contention for a seat in the state legislature.

Table 5.3. Political Capital in Goiás and the Federal District<sup>76</sup>

State	Goiás			Federal District		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Candidates	554	445 (80%)	109 (20%)	819	611 (75%)	208 (25%)
Elected Legislators	41	39 (95%)	2 (5%)	24	19 (79%)	5 (21%)
Incumbents	15	14	1	7	6	1
Other Political Positions	16	14	2	10	8	3
Family Connections	8	6	2	1	0	1

The analysis above portrays a political system that does not explicitly discriminate against women but rewards individual characteristics that are shared mainly by male candidates. Delegated capital, or the political capital enjoyed by established politicians, gives a clear competitive advantage to a candidate “class” that is dominated by men. Incumbency, the highest predictor for electoral success, benefits a group of candidates in which only 14 percent are women. The converted capital from other professions does not contribute to electoral success as much as delegated capital, and even when they provide some competitive advantage it normally benefits male candidates more than it does female candidates.

#### 5.4 Less Money, More Problems: The Gendered Nature of Campaign Finance

Professionalism is an important aspect of a candidate’s success, but the amount of money a candidate spends on a campaign is still the most important factor (Araújo, 2001, 2009; C. Araújo & J. E. D. Alves, 2007; Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009; Samuels, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) . Which individual traits attract more campaign funds? Table 5.4 shows the relationship between professions and campaign finance.

<sup>76</sup> Source: TSE (2012) and *Projeto Excelências* (2012).

Table 5.4. Individual Traits and Campaign Finance

DV= Campaign Expenditure	Variables	
	b (SE)	p-value
Gender	-4.798 (2.648)	0.07
Incumbent	131.439 (4.111)	0.0001
City Council	20.628 (5.233)	0.0001
Entertainer	-6.834 (8.606)	0.427
Agro-entrepreneur	57.183 (8.104)	0.0001
Entrepreneur	18.744 (3.777)	0.0001
Doctor	10.344 (5.309)	0.051
Nurse	1.087 (14.065)	0.938
Educator	-0.551 (4.154)	0.895
Public Servant	-2.232 (3.205)	0.486
Constant	23.903 (1.471)	0.0001
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.109	
F-Value	111.78	
N	9022	

Professions influencing campaign finance almost mirror the professions influencing the election chances of a candidate on Table 5.1, showing once again that the gendered aspect of Brazilian electoral politics is subtle. Gender by itself is a strong predictor for less campaign funds, showing that parties and economic elites still prefer to fund male candidates. Incumbents, City Council members, and agro-entrepreneurs are all strong predictors for increased campaign funds, showing once again that professions in which women are a very small minority are the ones deemed “electable” by political parties, political elites, and economic elites (providers of campaign finance funds).

Campaign finance is an active topic of discussion among candidates and politicians. When asked the open-ended question “what is the most important aspect of a successful campaign?” five of the twenty candidates interviewed named campaign funds or money as the

deciding factor.<sup>77</sup> Laisy Moriére, PT's National Women's Secretary, and Marina Sant'Anna, a PT Federal Deputy from Goiás state also argued that money is crucial for a successful campaign. The two saw finance as the main reason why women are not more successful in electoral campaigns and a reason why many women decide to stay away from electoral politics. Olivia Vieira, state legislative candidate in Goiás state reinforced these ideas by saying:

The financial aspect completely changes the direction of a campaign. Here in Goiás we see a lot of candidates extremely *endinheirados* (full of money). This makes for a very unequal campaign. That's because women have limited access to financial "power." This becomes visible starting with the salary. Then, women also struggle to accumulate capital. Women (in general and female candidates) have not been taught how to obtain resources based on the campaign finance model present in Brazil today, creating an unequal system that undermines female politicians (Interview by author conducted 08/21/2010).

Olivia Vieira, speaking in 2010, was echoing a complaint that seems timeless in Brazil. When talking about her (losing) City Council campaign in 1996, Oraidia Abreu voiced similar frustrations:

The biggest difficulty was the financial aspect. I was invited by a well-known female politician, because of the quota for women, but no one explained what the *pulo do gato*<sup>78</sup> to attain funds was. They [the party] offered us workshops and booklets, talking about the importance of women in politics, but there was no frank dialogue, not even from those who invited me. It seemed to me that everything was natural; all you had to do was open a committee, make the material, organize a group of supporters and start asking for votes (interview by author conducted 05/07/2009).

The lack of information combined with the low interest parties have in supporting female candidacies (Chapter 4) led women to spend, on average, considerably less than men in 2010. In Brazil, less campaign spending means no victory. However, even winning female candidates spent less than their male counterparts. As Figure 5.3 shows, female candidates need less money

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<sup>77</sup> The answers to this question varied greatly. One candidate named transparency as the most important aspect, while another named face to face campaign as the key factors. The five answers naming campaign finance made this the most important topic among all candidates.

<sup>78</sup> Literally meaning "the cat's jump," this is a popular Brazilian expression that means a secret that is not shared. This would be similar to saying "a magician never shares his secrets."



to increase their elections chances. Women win with less money, but losing women also spent less money, a key reason why the success rate of female candidates is much lower than that of male politicians.

Table 5.5. Campaign Finance: Gendered Differences<sup>79</sup>

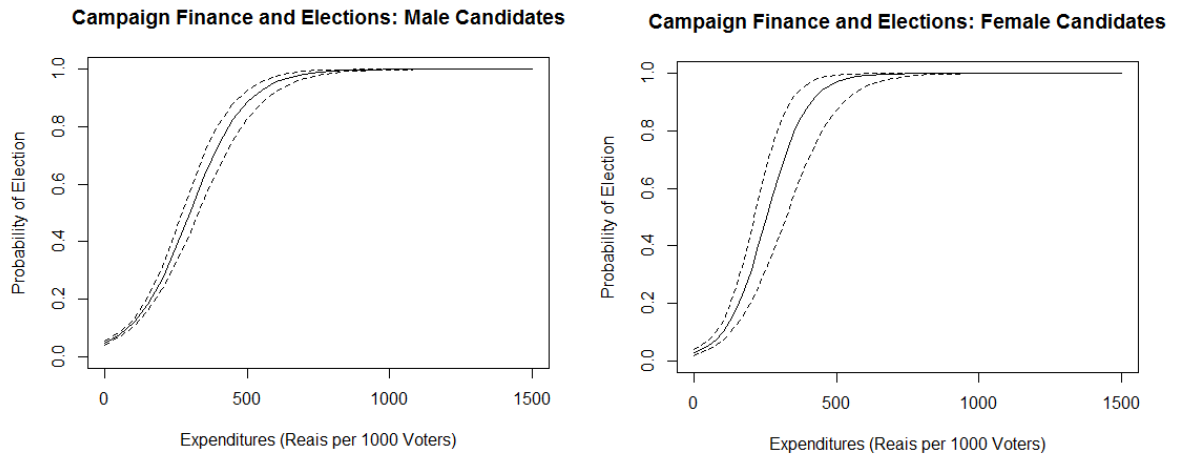
	Men		Women	
Candidates	Expenditure	Per Voter	Expenditure	Per Voter
All	R\$ 107,410	R\$ 0.037	R\$ 68,488	\$ 0.027
Elected	R\$ 434,744	R\$ 0.15	R\$ 383,550	R\$ 0.11
No Political Background	R\$ 79,985	R\$ 0.027	R\$ 48,109	R\$ 0.017
Incumbents	R\$ 409,928	R\$ 0.16	R\$ 377,786	R\$ 0.12

It is important to discuss *candidatos laranjas* and political strategy to understand the difference of campaign resources between winning and losing candidates (see Table 5.5). The presence of *candidatos laranjas* (candidates that do not have real chances and do not actively campaign) is a reality not only for women but also for men. It has been reported throughout the years that some candidates for legislative seats put their names on the party ticket but do not actively campaign. Sometimes, such *laranjas* have their name on the party ticket but actually campaign for another candidate on the same party ticket, leaving their name on the ballot only to achieve a modest amount of votes. Other candidates may campaign knowing that their chances are slim, but they do so either to grow in their own party or to help in the campaign of candidates for other positions.

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<sup>79</sup> Source: TSE (2012).

Figure 5.3 Campaign Finance and Elections: Predicted Probability<sup>80</sup>



In 2010 I interviewed two “losing candidates” who were not exactly *laranjas*. In the Federal District, André Dutra ran a campaign that he knew would not be successful for a number of reasons. When asked why he was pursuing an elected position that he knew he could not win, the candidate explained that by running a small but (hopefully) strong campaign, he would be able to convince the party’s executive board to give him more support in the next election cycle. The candidate explained:

I am only 21 years old, but I have been in the party since a very young age. The party executive board knows me but they do not believe I can win, so they do not give me a lot of support. If I run this campaign and achieve around 2,000 votes I can go back to them and say that with proper support I could win a seat. So this election is just a test, but I am running a hopeful campaign (Interview by author conducted 08/28/2010).

Another example of a known losing campaign is that of Lucia Rincon in the state of Goiás, who confessed that the expectations of winning a seat on the State Assembly were low, but that she

<sup>80</sup> The graphs above show the predicted probability of winning an election based on a candidate’s gender. The graph is based on the regression shown on Table 5.1. Predicted probabilities are estimated with all continuous independent variables held at their means and dichotomous variables set to their mode (for similar examples, see Boyd et al., 2010; Golder, 2006). Predicted probabilities calculated using R and the Zelig package (Imai et al., 2008).

felt the need to campaign to make the name of another candidate for the Chamber of Deputies more recognizable. The candidate stated that:

The party has little expectations in reaching the electoral quotient needed to win a seat in the state house. But we (State Assembly candidates) are campaigning hard for our Chamber of Deputy candidate, because we know he has a real chance of winning. If I get one thousand votes I feel like I did my job for the party, and if our Chamber of Deputies candidate wins it will be a great victory for all of us. I decided to run this year so I could help the other candidate, because that's what the party wanted us to do (Interview by author conducted 08/22/2010).

If some candidates run a campaign knowing they will not be successful, it is arguable that such candidates will spend less money in their campaign, which may explain the discrepancy in campaign expenditure between elected candidates and all other candidates. However, it is important to note that women are still at a disadvantage when it comes to campaign finance, since the average winning woman candidate spent R\$51,000 (U\$ 26,000) less than their male counterparts (see Table 5.4). The presence of some *candidatas laranjas* cannot be the only answer to why women candidates spent on average a little over half of what their male counterparts did.

In sum, campaign finance is a key aspect of electoral politics in Brazil. Female candidates and politicians have long complained that the current system puts women at a disadvantage since it rewards well-established politicians through name-recognition and resource allocation, while punishing political newcomers with limited access to financial resources. It is arguable that the Brazilian electoral system punishes male and female candidates at a similar rate, but the numbers show that women are clearly at a disadvantage when it comes to obtaining campaign funds. Nevertheless, it is important to note that female candidates are winning and spending less than their male counterparts. While this is troublesome, further research should address how these women are winning even if they spend, on average R\$51,000 (U\$26,000) less than winning male

candidates. The key to increasing female representation may not be an increase of campaign resources, but an increase of campaign efficiency.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The introduction of the quota law in 1995 and a language revision in 2009 that increased the number of female candidate considerably was not enough to improve female status within the established political elite. The 2010 elections showed, once again, that women face many hurdles when vying for a state legislative seat in Brazil. This chapter showed that it is the combinations between electoral institutions and candidate's individual characteristics—especially a candidate's profession—that truly influences the election of a candidate. This chapter also reiterated the importance of campaign finance in the election of candidates and showed that there is a strong relationship between professions that are more likely to receive campaign funds and professions that are more likely to yield a winning candidate. The informal norms of Brazil's political system continues to award political capital (delegated and converted) to sectors of society that are overwhelmingly male, indirectly keeping women marginalized in the electoral process. In other words, the informal institutions of Brazil's political system continue to reinforce the barriers women face in the country's formal, electoral system.

This chapter reiterates the assertions of Chapters 3 and 4, showing once again that the historical legacy of gender marginalization has led to the development of a system that is overtly and subtly biased against women. The importance of campaign resources and its close connection to political capital shown in this chapter reinforces the idea that old and well-established social networks have directly and indirectly kept women marginalized. Even though more female candidates ran in the 2010 election than ever before, the lack of money and political capital led to the limited success of these candidates. Nevertheless, the 2010 state legislative

elections did see some victorious women who were able to secure a seat even though they spent, on average, eleven percent less than their male counterparts. Future research on Brazilian elections must focus not only on the amount of money spent but also on how the money is being spent to determine how and why winning female candidates are more efficient than their male counterparts, and how do they differ in spending patterns from losing candidates, both male and female.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

The Brazilian president, Dilma Rouseff, is known today as one of the most powerful women in the world (Forbes, 2012; Hoare & Mannering, 2012; O'Shaughnessy, 2010; Time, 2012). Her election in 2010 showed that Brazilian voters are not afraid of voting for a woman. More importantly, it showed that women can win elections, even for the highest and most powerful position in the country. However, the election of one woman to the presidency does not erase the years of marginalization women have faced in electoral politics in Brazil. Women continue to struggle to carve their space in the political system in the country, as shown by the lower number of women elected to all levels of legislative elections in the country (see Table 1.1). This dissertation shows how the historical development of Brazilian political and social institutions led to creation of a system that is unwelcoming to most female candidates, leading to the marginalization of women in electoral politics.

The use of Feminist Historical Institutionalism allowed this dissertation to explore various aspects of the Brazilian political system while keeping in mind that gender and institutions matter. More importantly, the combination of empirical analysis with the contextualization that comes from using FHI allowed this research to better explain why and how women are marginalized from electoral politics in the country. In a political system that disregarded women throughout its modern history, the implementation of the quota law in 1995 did little to increase the number of female legislators in Brazil. However, it is important to identify how the gender quota law changed the dynamic of political institutions in the country, and how these changes can affect the presence of women in politics in the country. In this concluding chapter I first provide a discussion of the future of Brazil's electoral institutions, focusing on the quota law and debates surrounding electoral reform; and then I elaborate on

directions for future research on the election of female politicians in Brazil and the gender and representation literature as a whole.

### **6.1 The Quota Law and Political Reform in Brazil: Ponderings on the Future of Women's Representation**

In this dissertation I conclude that the quota law has not worked the way gender equality proponents hoped. The years of female marginalization could not be corrected by a law that was ambiguous in many aspects and provided limited enforcement mechanisms. However, to say that the quota law was a complete failure is to ignore the importance of discourse in changing actor behavior and political institutions. When asked about the quota law, political actors had different opinions on the role of the law in Brazil's political system. Five of the twenty candidates interviewed thought that the gender quota law was not fair or did not agree with it. The sole female candidate to disagree with the quota law argued that quotas make women feel like a sub-race, and that candidacies should be awarded based on a candidate's qualifications, not her/his gender or race (interview conducted 08/24/2010).<sup>81</sup> By keeping the question open-ended ("what is your opinion about the gender quota law?"), I also received responses that were in essence contradictory but relevant to the findings of this dissertation. One of the candidates interviewed viewed the quota law as problematic but acknowledged its importance:

The quota law does not solve anyone's problems. However, it exposes individuals who should be involved in politics and forces them to learn about the system. In this sense the law is important. A woman involved in politics without any preparation or support will be used by the system. The establishment of a quota law without proper "technical training" leads candidates to embarrass themselves

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<sup>81</sup> It is important to note that all candidates that were against the gender quota also mentioned the racial quota when making their argument against quotas. That is most likely because the issue of racial quotas in universities was a major topic of discussion during the time these interviews took place. In 2010 the Supreme Court was debating the constitutionality of racial quota laws in universities. This dissertation does not discuss the role of race in Brazilian politics, but it seems important to note that racial quotas were a major issue in 2010 in Brazil.

during the campaign. Parties must award candidacies and provide support, only then will things change (interview by author conducted 08/12/2010).

Nine of the twenty candidates interviewed (four of them men) were unequivocally supportive of the quota law. However, they all argued that the law does not do enough for female candidates. Five of these candidates made a direct connection between the quota law and changes in political behavior both within political parties and among the electorate. One candidate argued that “when you make the gender quota law mandatory, it automatically forces society to reflect on the issue” (interview conducted 09/03/2010), a feeling shared by the other four candidates. Another politician argued that “the law guarantees a percentage of women in this space (as candidates) in hopes that in the future they can fill this space naturally” (interview conducted 08/10/2010). Therefore, the feeling of candidates supporting the law is that even if women are not being elected in higher numbers today, the quota law has helped place gender inequality in electoral positions in the spotlight, forcing party leaders and voters to think about the issue and reflect on the importance of including more women in the political process.

Both supporters and critics of the quota law see the lack of support from parties as a key problem. Voicing concern about *candidatas laranjas*, one candidate calls the quota law as it stands in Brazil a legal, yet immoral policy. The candidate argues that parties add women to the list without seriously considering them as viable candidates (interview conducted 08/28/2010). The mini-political reform of 2009 attempted to address the lack of support women receive from political parties. A consequence of intense discussion between civil society (women’s groups), the federal government (through the Secretary for Women’s Policies—SPM), and Congress, the 2009 reform called for parties to allocate five percent of their party funds to the professionalization of female politicians, as well as a minimum five percent of air time during the free TV time awarded to parties during the campaign period. In an attempt to make the law



enforceable, parties can be punished if they do not meet the 30 percent gender quota. According to the new law, if parties do not meet the quota threshold they are required to allocate five percent of their party funds (on top of the five percent already prescribed by the law) to the professionalization of female politicians during the next election cycle (SPM, 2009).

The new law is a step in the right direction, as it continues to force parties and voters to think more seriously about women in politics and about how to make women into viable candidates. However, the lack of enforcement of the law, a consequence of language ambiguity and different interpretations across state electoral courts, continues to provide parties with loopholes to bypass gender-related policies. Even as new policies are implemented party leaders are reluctant to change their strategies to benefit women as a group. I argue that this is a consequence of the gendered nature of Brazil's political system and the historical marginalization of women in electoral politics. As long as parties are dominated by a small number of "owners," most of them men, very little can be done to increase the presence of women in legislative positions.

Given the current situation of Brazil's electoral system, I argue that the most essential change needed to increase female participation in electoral politics is an overhaul of party procedures. The candidate selection process is secretive and dominated by a few party leaders who tend to protect their own interests when nominating candidates and allocating campaign resources. As long as the party leadership is dominated by the same leaders who can make most decisions behind closed doors, it is highly unlikely that a profound change in the way candidate selection and support will happen any time soon. Therefore, in order to increase the number of female candidates and increase the chances of them winning, two things must happen: more transparency in the discussions surrounding candidacies and campaign support and a gender

quota provision for positions of leadership (party executive). While taking these steps would not put women candidates on equal footing with their male counterparts, it would allow party female leadership to grow and exert more influence in deciding who should run and who should be supported by the party in an election.

The propositions above are based on the assumption that the Brazilian political system will remain fundamentally unchanged and the key “rules of the game” will not be altered in the near future. However, discussions of a major overhaul in Brazil’s electoral rules and debates surrounding the best possible system for the country have been a part of the political discourse in the country since the signing of the constitution in 1988. While the Brazilian electoral system has been static in its most influential aspect (the way candidates are elected) for over 60 years, many changes have happened since the writing of the new constitution in 1988 and many more changes have been proposed, especially in the last 15 years. The signing of the quota law, and the mini-political reform of 2009 show that while the Brazilian electoral system is stable, Congress has not been shy in changing specific elements to the system that may be seen as problematic. Laws establishing the rules for electoral coalitions, limiting the possibility of party switching, and more recently the law targeting “dirty” politicians have all been seen as responses to the evolving electoral institutions in place (Anastasia & Nunes, 2006; Guedes Bezerra, 2010).

While the open-list PR system has survived all these years it also does not mean that it is safe from change. Proportional representation and the nature of lists have been one of the most widely debated issues in the past few years, and as talks of widespread political reform gains popularity questions involving the survival of open-list PR remains a hot topic. According to Anastasia and Nunes (2006), while proportional representation is the most preferred method of representation of Brazilian legislators, the type of list is an open field for debate. According to

the 2005 Brazilian module of the *Pesquisa sobre Elites Parlamentares Ibero-Americanas* (Survey on Iberian-American Parliamentary Elites), 40 percent of the respondents see the open-list system as the best electoral model, 23 percent prefer a closed-list system, and 18 percent would prefer a mixed list system (Anastasia & Nunes, 2006).

As Chapter 3 explains, scholars and activists see a closed-list system with a placement mandate as the key to increasing female representation. Brazilian scholars and activists used Argentina's case as the perfect example of a gender quota law that closed most possible loopholes and allowed for almost immediate increase in female representation in the parliament. By forcing parties to not only nominate 30 percent of female candidate but also place women in a way that they have a clear chance of being elected (every third candidate in the party lists must be a woman) the number of women rose from six percent to 25 percent between 1990 and 1997, and today women almost are 40 percent of all national legislators (see Araújo, 2010b; Jones, 1998; Krook, 2009; Piscopo, 2011; Schwindt-Bayer, 2011). The Brazilian women's movement is well aware of Argentina's success, as well as most politicians directly engaged in debates about the electoral system and gender equality. Six of the politicians I interviewed in Brazil brought up Argentina as an example Brazil must follow.

The reality is that the only way to quickly alter the gender makeup of political institutions is to establish affirmative action policies such as the one implemented in Argentina. Previous experience in Brazil shows, however, that such a drastic change in favor of female politicians is unlikely. Chapter 4 showed that while the female leadership in Congress and civil society pushed hard for a gender quota law that would provide women with a real chance of winning, the male dominated Congress (and executive) was able to water down the law, allowing for ambiguity that is detrimental to the enforcement of the law. Moreover, interpretation of the law has, so far,

rested in the hands of state electoral courts. In the majority of cases, these courts have ruled that parties cannot be punished for not having enough female candidates, making the law, once again, irrelevant (Tarde, 2010).

Quotas were established in the 1990s as a way to fast track changes in the gender makeup of political institutions (D Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2003; A. Tripp et al., 2006; A. M. Tripp & Kang, 2008). Activists and gender equality proponents hoped that Brazil's gender quota law would increase considerably (and quickly) the number of female politicians, but the numbers show that Brazil still lags behind most countries in terms of women's representation. The quota law did include gender equality in the discourse of political parties and voters, and while women have yet to significantly increase their number, I argue that current developments in Brazilian society show the subtle impact of gender quotas. The election of Dilma Rouseff as the first woman president was very important to the cause, and feminists and gender equality proponents hope that a "Dilma effect" will lead more women to pursue a career in politics. The federal government continues to increase the number of women holding cabinet office, and today 25 percent of cabinets are held by women (Presidência, 2012). The Senate, the only legislative institution without the quota requirement, now holds 16 percent of women, up from 7 percent in 1997 (IPU, 2012b). In other words, in the last 15 years women have entered politics in Brazil at an unprecedented rate, and the debates surrounding the quota law have been instrumental in placing women in political discourse and increasing the visibility of gender inequality in politics as an institutional problem.

## **6.2 Prospects for Future Research**

The connection between path dependence and the marginalization of female politicians is an aspect of the Brazilian political system that must be studied in a comparative perspective. In Chapter 3 I argue that the nature of Brazil's political system must be understood in a historical

perspective to fully capture why and how the open-list PR system creates barriers for female candidates. By showing how the Vargas period was critical to the development of a political system that marginalized women throughout the twentieth century, this dissertation established a parameter that must be compared to other countries in order to expand our understanding of the role of electoral institutions on the election of women. I believe that a comparative historical analysis between Brazil and other countries using the open-list PR system can provide new insights in the study of gender and representation. Establishing critical junctures in these other countries (Finland, Poland, Chile, and Peru) and following the evolution of the electoral system, women's place in society and politics, and party politics could show in greater detail how gender influenced the development of such political systems and its impact of women's representation.

In Chapter 5 I show the influence of political capital in state legislative elections. In order to expand the scope of analysis, further research must continue to collect candidate-level data on all levels of government in Brazil to establish parameters for comparison between City Council, State Assembly, and Chamber of Deputies election. By continuing the comparison between male and female politicians I hope to show how electoral strategy and political capital influences these legislative elections in different ways. Since 2002 the Brazilian Federal Electoral Court (TSE) has released candidate level data containing biographical and party information for each candidate running for legislative elections. As TSE continues to improve on the quality of this data it will also be possible to explore how the dynamic between successful campaigns and key factors (individual traits, party characteristics, and institutional factors) change across time in Brazil.

Campaign finance has been widely established in the Brazilian politics literature as a key to electoral success (Ames, 1995; Araújo, 2001; dos Santos, 2007; Pereira, Rennó, & Samuels,

2008; Perissinotto & Miriade, 2009; Samuels, 2001a, 2001c). The analysis in Chapter 5 not only affirms this fact but it showed that female candidates spend less money to get elected. The next step in this research should therefore focus on how this campaign money is spent. As TSE data becomes more reliable regarding campaign finance and expenditures,<sup>82</sup> scholars can start focusing on how candidates are spending their money, which aspects of the campaign are the most important to succeed, and how female and male candidates (winning and losing) spend their money differently.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

As women continue to increase their presence in electoral politics across the world, debates regarding the role of institutions on their election will continue to be relevant. In the case of Brazil, electoral institutions have allowed for the development of a system that limits women's access to political power, even as civil society becomes more receptive to female politicians. While restricting, the electoral system has changed considerably in the past two decades, allowing female politicians to slowly carve more space in electoral politics at all levels of government. This dissertation showed that, at the state-level, women as a group still face many hurdles when entering electoral politics. However, every year more women are able to fight for a seat and they are also slowly becoming better prepared candidates and winning seats. As the political system continues to change in Brazil, scholars must keep investigating the role gender and institutions play in the election of legislators in all levels of government.

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<sup>82</sup> Currently, all candidates must provide TSE with a ledger accounting for all campaign money received and spent. If a candidate does not provide this end-of-campaign balance they are barred from running for office. Therefore, data on campaign contribution and expenditure are becoming more reliable.

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## **Appendix**

During the summer of 2008 I interviewed 10 politicians (City Council members, State Assemblymen, and Federal Deputies) in Goiás state and in the Federal District, asking questions about campaign finance strategies. During these interviews I also probed these politicians on the role of gender in politics in Brazil. This pilot project led to the development of my dissertation research, focusing specifically on electoral strategies for State Assembly elections in 2010. Information collected during these interviews in 2008 was used in this dissertation, including interview segments that were pertinent to the discussions of campaign strategies and gender differences.

Between June of 2010 and February of 2011 I interviewed 20 State Assembly candidates in Goiás state and the Federal District, as well as five party leaders (including PT's National Women's Secretary). All interviews were semi-structured, where I asked a number of pre-set questions (see below) and allowed for deviation from these questions if needed. Because in 2010 there were over 600 candidates in Goiás state and over 800 candidates in the Federal district I tried to interview candidates that would cover a number of individual and party characteristics. Interviews were scheduled via telephone or email and normally conducted at the candidate's campaign headquarters. The interviews allowed me to contextualize today's political environment with the historical discussions of earlier chapters as well as help me understand how candidates perceive the political system and the campaign process.

All candidates were interviewed before the elections, and seven were interviewed after the elections. Candidates were asked questions about their political career, campaign strategies, and views on the role of women in politics. Pre-election interviews lasted between 6 and 40 minutes. Post-election interviews lasted between 10 minutes and 35 minutes. During these

interviews questions surrounded the interviewee's political life, the question of women in politics in their respective parties, the gender quota law as whole and specific party strategies surrounding it, and questions about the party's candidate selection process. Interviews with political leaders were less structured and had as their main objective to help corroborate the opinions and arguments made by candidates. These interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 75 minutes.

Table 1: Candidate's Characteristics

<b>Total Candidates</b>	<b>20</b>
Male	11
Female	10
Seeking re-election	4
Elected	5
Left-Leaning Party	8
Major Political Party (PT, PSDB, PMDB, PDT)	5
Smaller Party	15

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### Interview Questions:

Interviews were conducted in Portuguese, then transcribed and translated by the author.

#### Pre-Election

1. Tell me a little bit about your political career.
2. What are your expectations for this election? Are you optimistic about a victory?
3. What types of strategies are you using to raise funds?
4. What is the most important factor in a victorious political campaign this year?
5. How do you see the voter's opinions about female candidates?
6. What is your opinion about the gender quota law?
7. Do you think the gender quota law is working?

For female candidates only:

8. As a candidate, do you think being a woman is a positive or a negative factor?

9. Do you focus on the fact that you are a women in your campaign?

#### Post-Election

1. In your opinion, which were the key factors that led to your victory/loss in this year's election?
2. Did your campaign priorities change during the campaign period?
3. If you were to start the campaign from scratch today, what is the one thing you would do different?
4. What types of strategies did you use to obtain campaign funds?
5. Do you think your fundraising strategies were successful?
6. Do you think your fundraising strategy was similar or different from other candidates?  
Why?
7. Do you think your party gave you adequate support as a candidate?
8. What do you think influenced the level of party support for your campaign?
9. Do you think all candidates received the same amount of support from the party as you?
10. Do you think your success/failure in this campaign was influence by any individual characteristics such as gender, race, profession, or religious views?
11. (For women) Do you think that your campaign strategy was different than others because you are a woman?
12. What are your political goals following this election?
13. Do you think your party provided sufficient support to female candidates?